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Bharat Singh (JKAS)

Editor
Dr Abid Ahmad

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CONTENTS

EDITORIAL IV

SPECIAL FEATURE ON GHANI KASHMIRI

1. POETRY OF ADHERENCE TO MODEL: GHANI KASHMIRI Prof Shafi Shauq 01

2. THE POETIC GENIUS OF GHANI KASHMIRI Dr Mufti Mudasir 20

ARTICLES

3. RISHI-SUFI TRADITION OF KASHMIR Historical Background and Contemporary Relevance Er. Vinod Kumar 35

4. AUREL STEIN: FORGOTTEN HISTORIAN OF KASHMIR (1846-1947) Iqbal Ahmad 49

5. CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES AND FEMALE EDUCATION IN KASHMIR (1846-1947)

Dr Shiraz Ahmad Dar

Dr Heena Majeed 54

6. LAMA-DANCE- DRAMA

In the context of ancient theatre

Shabir Sarwar Malik H 67

SHORT STORY

7. ANIMALIA Habib Kamran 73

EDITORIAL

Prof Rehman Rahi, the legendary writer in Kashmiri language, breathed his last on 9 January, 2023 after a prolonged illness. Rahi proved to be the most formidable and defining poet and litterateur in contemporary Kashmir who steered the Kashmiri language towards the heights it has attained among the languages in the country. He is the only recipient from Jammu & Kashmir of the Gnanpeeth Award, in addition to other awards and felicitations.

Rahi was a versatile writer in the Kashmiri language dealing with diverse themes in poetry and prose. Acknowledged for his loaded vocabulary, multi-cultural allusions, and density of meaning, Rahi remains an original poet with an unparalleled complexity of thought.

Rahi's poetry mirrors contemporary sensibility that reflects life's tragic sense, its vulnerability, its awareness of the sense of fragmentation as experienced in contemporary times.

Rahi is known for his multicultural consciousness reflected in the choice of his themes and diction. His vast reading and awareness about the symbols of diverse cultural identities provided him with a global perspective, enabling him to deftly integrate these symbols in his poetic world, and creating a diction of his own that stands apart for its complexity, originality and concreteness.

A polyglot and eclectic reader, Rahi uses Kashmir's rich cultural identity and its mythical topography for structuring his poems. Kashmir's antiquarian character, its mythical lore and cultural signposts remain his handy reference.

Rahi's poetry is also known for its serious engagement with deeper questions of life. This poetry is also characterized by a liberal recourse to myths and images that are global in their reach.

Apart from his poetry, Rahi was also a critic and prose writer. He enriched Kashmiri prose through his inimitable style, and his critical writings have proved path-breaking. He introduced universal standards of literary creativity and appreciation, proposing tested and reliable touchstones of literary criticism to assess the true worth and merit of Kashmiri writings. That in itself led to the growth of poetry, prose and criticism, further enriching the language in genres other than poetry.

His collection of essays, *Kahwet,* published in 1979, remains the only evaluation of its kind of Kashmiri language and literature. It sheds light on unexplored dimensions of classical and modern Kashmiri poetry, explicating the definition and explanation of creative literature in changing times.

Another book of his, titled *Shaar Shineasi,* is a pioneering work on Kashmir's mystic ethos. It explains how the Sufi and mystic poetry of Kashmir has humanistic roots and how it is relevant even now.

From being a celebrated poet to a trend-setting critic and literary theorist, Rehman Rahi remains one of the most formidable influences on Kashmiri culture and literature. His distinct approach to Kashmiri language and its adoption to convey universal themes remains unique. His legacy of having created his own idiom for his expression sets him apart from his contemporaries. His artistic accomplishments have expanded the imaginative and poetic world of Kashmir language in an unprecedented way.

Rahi's death in an irreparable loss to the literary landscape of the country as a whole.

(Dr) Abid Ahmad

POETRY OF ADHERENCE TO MODEL:
GHANI KASHMIRI

Prof Shafi Shauq

vos exemplaria Graeca nocturna versate manu, versate diurna

(Horace, 65-8 BC) : *Ars Poetics*, 268-9)

(Make the works of the Greek your model,read them during nights, read them in daytime.)

Ghani Kashmiri provides us with yet another illustration of the fact that classic poetry need not be written in the poet's own first language, wrongly called the 'mother tongue'; the poet's education and training in a certain genre of poetry in any language is the sole determining force to direct and mould his/her individual talent. Ghani, Ghalib, Iqbal and many others gave the best of their talent in the classical genres like the *ghazal*, the *rubai* and the *qasidah* that follow the antecedents in a long descent of Iranian poetry. The tempo, diction, purpose, and the metre chosen by the poet in various moods and situations decide the genius of a poet. Unlike modern poetry- modern in the sense of being rooted in actuality and necessarily in the first language of the poet, rather than poetic tradition- classical poetry requires rigorous exercise in the set rules, restraint from individual venturing, and strict adherence to the model. Ghani Kashmiri too showed poetic excellence in *ghazal*, and *qasidah* (not in praise of the men of rank) and *rubai* that aim at presenting the well-established ideas. He believed in achieving and showing the forte of his individual talent only through following the masters; individual poet in the specific genres in his opinion is no more than casting shadows on the pre-existing wall:

niest maa raa quwwate be takiyah ustaadan Ghani,

naqsh dievaarem hamchon saayah ta barkhaastem

No strength do I have to be except reliance on the masters,

a print on the wall I am beside my shadow until I vanish.

Hardly anything is known for sure about the birth of Mulla Tahir Ghani, yet the conjecture that he was born in or around 1630 AC is widely accepted. Born in a scholarly Ashai family, he received his education and instruction from Mulla Muhsin Fani. In his early poetic compositions he used the pen-name Tahir, which he later gave up and used Ghani as it sounded resemblance with the name of his teacher Fani. He spent much of his life in a small shanty at Saeedpore, Rajouri Kadal in Srinagar.

Ghani's fame reached circles of Persian poets in Iran and of the subcontinent. The internal evidence supports the opinion that he did travel, but some of his verses, deeply nostalgic, suggest that he spent some time away about his native land. He wrote:

kardah ast havaa-e hind dilgir mara

aye bakht rasaan ba baaghi Kashmir mara

The air of India makes my heart feel morose,

destiny, make me reach my garden of Kashmir.

It is said about Ghani that he died young. But again the following verses of the poet suggest contrary to the common belief and make us surmise that he died when he was in his old age and suffered from various infirmities:

ze piri chunaan gashtah an naatuwaan

ki dandaan ba junbad bajaaye zabaan

My old age has left me in infirmity,

My teeth rattle, while my tongue does not move.

Rekht dandaan zi dahn raft jawaani burbaad

Ah azien jaalah ki dar mazr'a bakhtam uftaad

Loss of teeth from my mouth, ruins the charm of my youth,

Oh the fall of hails makes my fortune desolate.

Ghani, according to G.M.D. Sufi, lived at Saeedpora, near the shrine of Sayyid Hassan Baladuri, Rajouri Kadal. Sufi has identified an old shanty that according to the common opinion was the residential house of Ghani. (1949: vol. ii.129) Without any substantial proof, Sufi states that the grave of Ghani lies in Gurgari Mohalla / Qutub-ud Din Pora, of Zaina Kadal. Justice Hakim Imtiyaz Hussain, on the contrary, states with authority that Ghani, who belonged to an esteemed family of Shia Community, called Mulla, lived at Babapora, of the old city. He was buried at Hassanabad. He writes:

> Mohammad Tahir of the Mulla family is buried in his ancestral graveyard at Hassanabad; the large grave is marked by a stone boulder (6 ft. x 2.6 ft. with an opening in the centre. (2017:130)

Khwaja Muhammad Azam Didmari, the author of *Waqui'ati Kashmir* (1735 AC) wrote that Ghani died in his youth in 1671 AC.

az faut-i Ghani gashta ki vmah ghamgin

harkas shudah dar maatami o khaanah nishin

taarikh-i wafaatash agar pursand bigo

"pinhan shudah ganj-i hunari zer-i zamin"

(1182 Hijri)

Ghani's death made everyone bereaved

In mourning all confined themselves to their house;

If you are asked to suggest his death, say:

"The treasure of art was kept concealed under clay."

Believing in astute abstinence and solitude Ghani avoided association with the men of power, nor did he aspire to have any clout among the circles of rank, although the Mughal governor Zafar Khan admired his poetry. Mohammad Iqbal wrote the following short poem about the reclusion of Ghani:

Ghani aan sukhan gooye bulbul safer

navaa sanji Kashmir mainav aseer

chu andar saraa buud dar bastah daasht

chu raft az saraa takht raavaa guzaasht

yake guft aiy shaaire dil rasey

ajab daard az kaari tuu har kasey

bapaasikh chi khush guft marde faqir

faqir wa ba aqlimi m'aani amir

zi man aanchi didand yaaran ravaast

darin khaanah juz man mat'a kujaast

Ghani taa nashinad ba kaashaanah ash

Mataa-e garaani ast dar khaanah ash

Chu aan mehfil afroz dar khaanah neist

Tahi tar azien heich kaashaannah neist

Ghani was a poet, as if a bulbul, the messenger,

the poet of Kashmir, the Peer of Paradise, he was.

While he stayed inside his house, he bolted the door,

when he left for anywhere, he removed the padlock.

Once a commoner said to him, "O the poet of the heart,

queer are all your habits, different from those of others!"

The sage-like poet, as he was the master of phrase,

apparently indigent, but rich in meaning.

"What do you see except me in the house?

What riches are there except my own self there?

While Ghani (the rich) stays there inside the hut,

a priceless asset is there inside the nest.

And while that person shows no presence there, the house is emptier than it actually is."

Ghani, like all the poets of the classical poets in the genres of the *ghazal, qasidah*, and *rubai* never thought of representing the natural and the actual; he rather believed in the poetic merit of strict adherence to prescriptive norms of form and content by redoing what was already done in multitudinous ways. Decorum and genre are inherited by unquestioned surrender to the method of the masters, rather than innovation.

junoone kuu ki az qaide khird bieron kasham paa raa

kunam zanjieri paye khweshtan daamaani sahraa raa

ba bazme mai parastaan muhtasib khush izte daard

ki choon aayad ba majlis shishah khaali mekunad jaa raa

agar sharte havas daari asiere daami izlat shav

ki dar parvaaz daarad gooshah giri naam enqaa raa

shikast az har dar-o divar mi baar-e digar gadroon

zi rangi chahrai maa reikht range kaanai maa raa

na daarad rah bagardoon rooh ta bashad nafas dar tan

rasai neist dar parvaaz murg-e rishta dar paa raa

Ghani raoze siyah-e pieri kan'aan raa tamaashaa kun

ki rooshan kard noor-e diedahash chashme zulaikha raa

In ecstasy I stepped out from the prison of Reason,

I chained my feet to the skirt of wilderness.

In the caucus of the besotted, the judge, much esteemed, Once joined the circle he empties the goblets.

In case you hanker after fame, be captive of solitude,

in soaring free there is no scope for withdrawal to closets.

Having demolished the walls of confinement, I seek them again,

the colour of my visage might reflect the ruin of my abode.

No way to the skies you find for soul is confined to the body,

no freedom is in soaring, the bird needs no claws.

Ghani, create a spectacle of the dark day of the old man of Kan'an,

Behold! Zulaikha's eyes reflect the radiance of his vision.

Like all poets of the past in the East, Ghani's creative energy was directed by his zeal to achieve poetic excellence within the prescriptive values of decorum, eloquence, novelty of meter, rhyme and adherence to the classics; each of his hemistich reminds us of numerous antecedents in the classical Persian poetry.

In conformity with oriental poets' love for passion, Ghani revels in the Khayyamian wild abandon and fulfilment. This kind of submission happens when actual condition of living is so obliterating that the poets and thinkers seek solace in escape and forgetfulness. Ghani believed that confinement and discipline are so unavoidable that the thinking human beings reconstruct the ramparts of the prison that they demolish.

Pre-existing ideas, independent of individual mind, play key-role in Ghani's poetry. He believed that ideas are a sort of repertoire that is made accessible to individual contemplation; it yields more results through disciplined effort of art. Commenting on the importance of ideas in Ghani's poetry, Prof. G.R. Malik says:

> Ghani's ideas spring from his stray observations and random reflections. Many of them are the oft-repeated saws and platitudes aptly illustrated with reference to observed phenomena. This is not to deny Ghani's commitment to certain traditional values which can be traced back to Islam and the native mystical tradition of Kashmir. His austerity, abstinence from sensual pleasure, contentment, and sense of self-respect have assumed the form of a legend. Iqbal rightly singled out for special praise this particular aspect of Ghani's personality which is so accurately reflected in his pen-name, Ghani. (2007: 158-59)

In all his mystic rumination to attain something that lies beyond the objective world, Ghani rediscovers his own ruminating 'self' that is determined by what lies beyond the self in the circumscribing world of things. Here is how he depicts self as passive receptacle of the stimuli from the phenomenal world, yet as the primeval force that assigns significance to the contingent.

sar hamchu taari sabha bar dar kashidah am

aakhir rasidaham ba khud wa aarmidah am

dar aalam-e misaal misaalat na boodah ast

har chand kaz daricha-i aayeenah diedah am *har kas kashiedah aarizoo-e khwesh dar kinaar*

man dast-e khwesh dar baghal-e khud kasiedah am

baalaa girft kaari man az aahi aatashien

az naalah choon spand bajaaye rasiedah am

faarigh nayam zi harzah duyee hamchu aasiyaa

behudah paaye khwesh badaaman kashiedah am

As I pulled the last bead of the rosary

I ultimately reached my own self, I was silenced.

In the world of resemblance, nothing resembles you,

much did I try to see through the mirror of my vision.

Everyone is driven by the desire for oneself to the shore,

I, with my own hands, find myself in my own arms.

Heights I attain through my fiery whines,

my cry, like a grain of rue, reaches its destination.

No freedom I get from the gyration like that of a wind-mill;

For no use did I stretch my feet from the garment.

Engrossed in the ecstasy gained through re-union with the ultimate is the purpose of poetic process: it is a venture that begets the wrath of the ignorant as it entails ignoring the considerations of loss and gain, and the set norms of good and bad. As a contemplative thinker, Ghani watches with cynicism the limits of worldly living, as if he were a spectator of his own boundaries that he himself created for his incarceration. Having accepted values of *being- in- the- world*, one erects the limits of the confinement so that he looks well-rounded, authentic and an esteemed responsible citizen. With the aim of attaining a self that one could authentically believe in, the wandering soul is always in quest or a never-ending journey. It is perpetual consciousness of deficiency that makes one different form the ignorant who prefers arrogance of having achieved what is measureable in terms of material gains. In spite of his disillusionment with the norms and values of the world, he like a mystic par excellence knows the inalienability of the acting and erring *self* and all-determining unknown intellect; the result is quivering in dread. It is interminable dread that keeps consciousness quivering like the feather of a bird or a spread out leaf.

dar daari aakhirat nai daar-i duniyaa dar nazar daaram
zi ishqat kaar chon Mansoor baa daari digar daaram
daro dievar vaa kar dasti chashmme tamaasha kar
manam kun rooyi hasrat chashm bar divaar wa daaram
gubaari khaatiram az ahli aalam jma' shud chandaan
ki mikhwaham ba peshi rooyi khud divaar wa bar daaram
zi shauq-e harzaj gardi hamchu regi shiesha-i saa'at
ba manzil taa nihaadam paayi andaazi safar daaram
Ghani yak rangi-e m'ashooq wa aashaq diedani daarad
Gunaahe bar par-i tooti wa bargi naishakar daaram

Neither in the hereafter, nor here do I have anything in view,

in Love, like Mansoor, I hold a different world in view.

Open the doors and windows, see the spectacle;

with pitiful eyes I look at your walls and doors.

Why do the people of the world throng in around me?

I wish I could hide myself in walls and doors.

For wandering, like a particle of the glass of time,

inclined toward my destination, I step out, and am journey.

I, Ghani, see the monotony of the same love and the lover,

my sin, I quiver like bird's feather, or a leaf of sugarcane.

Quest for the self, painfully conscious of its inadequacies, is suggested through many referents, particularly *andaleeb,* i.e., the thrush/nightingale, that gets the most only through singing without ambition of reaching the ears that hear it; singing itself becomes its end.

Har rag-e gul rishtah-i baashad ba-paay-e andleeb,

daam diegar niest baajat az baray-e andleeb.

hast bar shaakhe gule ashrat saraye andleeb,

bar zamien ke i rasad dar bagh paaye andleeb

taa vazied az gulshan-e koye tu baade dar chaman

baashad az gul aatshe dar zeri paaye andleeb

hiech tukhme niest zaay'a dar zamien-e paak ishq

khandah haaye gul died az girya haaye andleeb *az sadaye khandahye gul mishawad roshan ki niest*

hiech sauté dilkasha tar az navaaye andleeb

nav aruusaane chaman mushtaaqi diedari tawaand

hast dar gulzaari koyat gu bajaaye andleeb

shud zamine sh'aram az gulhaaye muzmun gulshani

has har baite dard ishratsaraye andleeb

Every fibre of flower has relation with the feet of the thrush,

No snare is there other than the desire of the thrush.

Every bough is meant for the pleasure of the thrush,

Why should its feet touch the surface of the garden?

Until the wind of the garden blows to reach your avenue,

bed of flowers is a bed of embers under the feet of the thrush.

No grain of seed goes waste in the soil of pure love,

Flower's smiles evince the wailing of the thrush.

The sound of every blossoming flower is heard,

no other sound is as charming as the call of the thrush.

Newly bloomed brides are allured by your visage,

in the garden of your street flowers abound instead of the thrush.

The soil of my verse is replete with the themes of the garden,

In every verse of pain there is a pleasure-garden of the thrush.

While accepting man's inevitable strife, in spite of its futility, the poet sees enough reason to mourn as it dispels anguish and sorrow. He, like a true mourner, expresses his ache in a series of shibboleths borrowed from classical Persian poetry. Death of dear ones produces a state of perpetual grief that leads to the mourner's fulfilment.

zindah dar gooram agar gardishe aflaak kunad

ba ki dar margi azizaan basaram khaak kunad

mikunam giryah zi aaluudgiye daamani khwesh

ishk taa daamani aaluuda-i man saaf kunad

baada-i aish nashwid zi dilam gardi malaal

khwesh ra gar khum-e aflaak tabe khaak kunad

aashyaanash girbi khatiri gulban baashad

andalebe ki gul-e mail ba khashaak kunad

har ki chon gor zindah khandah zi maatam zadgaan

chashm daaram ki falak dar dahnash khaak kunad

aashyaan banddyi bulbul ba gulistaan bejaa ast

magar az sahni chaman khaar wa khase paak kunad

dar shabe vasl nishaan midihad az sham'a mara

pardah chon duur zi rukhsaari arqnaak kunad

mahrai maa rahuud dar nazari baadahkashaan

sar biruun danah-i anguur chu az taak kunad

If change in times makes me live again in the grave,
clay shall I become again to see the death of my dear ones.
I shed tears to clean the dirt of my own garments,
Tears cleanse the impurity of the skirt of my garments.
Mellow drink does not remove sadness from my heart,
even if the cup of the skies turns me into clay.
If abode in the bush is the aim of your thought,
in the desire of the flower the thrush shall be turned into clay.
If they laugh at the grave seeing the mourners,
My eyes see the sky of gloom turning their mouth into clay.
Bulbul's making nest in the garden may be useless,
yet it clears the garden of the strewn straws and thorns.
In the night of union the light of the candle reveals to me,
a glowing face drenched in sweat when the veil is lifted.
In the eyes of the revellers my desire may look like a malaise,
when the grapes hardly reveal their heads on the vines.

Ghani, as a mystic, believes that suffering and pain have a cathartic value for removing sickness of forgetfulness from mind. In many a verse, Ghani advocates sharpening sense of suffering as it is the substance of responsible being. Seeing all possibilities within human body, he pleads for a process of exploring the hidden energy; exploration is the preoccupation of human soul. Body and soul are not two separate entities for a passionate poet like Ghani, the duality is the fallacy of the unreflecting mind that seeks pleasure. Ghani, therefore, believes in total giving up to the life of uncertainty and calamities. Fear and trembling are the products of being on the fence, while liberty lies in absolute plunge into the drift and moving with it while fighting force of flow:

gar dihi tan ba balaa bah ki na duzdi pahlu

kishti az sail buvad aiman wa pul dar khatar ast

Surrender your body to the spate, never seek escape

boat in spate is safer, but the bridge is in danger.

Complaint of pain is deemed a travesty of mystic forbearance as it originates from man's sense of alienation from reality, and desire for reunion. This self-indulgent suffering does not need sympathy of the listener as Ghani calls it perpetual refreshing of the wound.

kushaad kaari khud natawan tam'a az aashna kardan

kuja naakhun twand band az ungusht waa kardan

twangar ra na zebad lab bakhwahish aashna kardan

ki be dasti tahi pur badnuma baashad du'aa kardan

Spreading out plight to the acquaintance I never need, Once the nails are kept closed, the fingers stretch out.

It does not behove the rich to open lips for the listener,

It is the empty besmeared hand that rises for prayers.

ba istighnaa guzashtan az jahaan aasaan nami baashad

buvad dasshvaar qata'-e rah duur az pusht-i paa kaadan

With disdain for the world it is not easy to leave it

Difficult is sever when heals are turned backward.

Having the meaningless of life always in view, Ghani accepts it is as an engrossing pastime like play of chess. Man is by necessity inclined to remain in strife, be it as ludicrous as a feud with people around you.

ghariebi bar bisaat-e dahar hamchon mahraye shatranj

baraaye khana take jang baa hamsaayah haa kardan

Poverty makes you a piece of chess on the chess-board

for the sake of a space we may feud with our neighbours.

It is only a wilful renunciation that could give you freedom from the bonds with the mundane world; there is, otherwise no escape.

agar baashad Ghani hamchon kliedam khaanah az aahan

shawad vairaan agar khwaaham daro yak lahzah jaa kardan

If , O Ghani, you like the key of lock of house,

yearn for wilderness, leave in a moment the slot.

In tune with the classicists of the orient, Ghani produces beautiful spectrum of colours and an alluring pattern by using time-honoured themes and images - be they sound as repetitive as the taglines; poetics of the prescription is unavoidable for all forms of the classic genres, including the *ghazal.*

yaar dar bazm aamad maa az hayaa barkhaastem

choon nagin taa naqshi baa binishst maa barkhaastem

dast mibaayast shust az aabiru-e khweshtan

maa ze khwan-e ahli daulat naashtaa barkhaastem

baarhaa ba saayah sanjidem khud raa dar viqaar

oo zi tamkien bar nishast   wa maa barkhaastem

biqaraari baa tamaashaa kun ki maanande spand

garm taa dar bazmi o kardem jaa barkhaastem

kas paye t'azimi maa az ahl-e majlis bar nkhast

bahre paase izzate aakhir khud ze jaa barkhaastem

niest maa raa quwwati be takyah istaadan Ghani

naqash divaarem hamchon saayah taa barkhaastem

Once Love entered the bevy, I bashfully left,

the gem occupied its rightful place, I left.

My hands needed to be pure for their honour,

I left hungry from the feast of the rich.

I, for my self-esteem in company with my shadow,

once I saw it prostrated on the ground, I left.

Restiveness makes me a spectacle like a grain of rue,

once fully fervid in the horde, I left.

Not for my honour did I wilfully leave.

I do not have strength to stand without a support

I am there like a fresco beside a shadow, until I leave.

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(The author, a former Professor in Kashmiri, is a renowned writer and translator.)

THE POETIC GENIUS OF GHANI KASHMIRI

Dr Mufti Mudasir

کچھ گدا شاعر نہیں ہوں میر میں
تھا میرا سر مشق دیوان غنی

Mir, I am a poet of no mean credentials
For I did hone my skills on the divan of Ghani
(Mir Taqi Mir)

Mulla Tahir Ghani Kashmiri (d. 1669) is undoubtedly the most outstanding Persian poet of Kashmir and among the best who wrote in a style which is commonly known as *sabk-e hindi* or the Indian Style. In fact, the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries witnessed the flowering of this new style in the Persian *ghazal*, which its practitioners and earliest critics preferred to call *taazah goyi* or 'speaking afresh'. Although many scholars have rightly argued that there is nothing specifically Indian about the style, it is well-established that it flourished during the Mughal period when a great influx of poets from Iran and other regions to India took place. Thus, Urfi (d. 1590), Nazīri (d.1519), Tālib Āmuli (d. 1626-7), Abu Tālib Kalīm (d.1651), Salīm (d.1647-8) and numerous others made India their home and achieved distinction in the Indian courts. In addition to these, countless poets of Indian origin made their mark in Persian and earned applause and admiration from their Iranian counterparts.

For its detractors, the practitioners of *taazah goyi* poetry marks a departure from the earlier more indigenous and hence 'purer' styles in its excessive reliance on rhetorical devices such as conceit, pun, ambiguity and paradox. Alleging that the poets of this style employed a hyper-cerebral and convoluted diction, some Iranian critics of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries held the Indian and Indian domiciled Iranian poets responsible for turning their backs on the fluent, simple and mellifluous style of the earlier Persian masters. These opinions gained acceptance due to the emergence of a new literary movement in Iran in the eighteenth century known as *adabi bāzgasht* or 'literary revival'. The movement, not unlike most other literary movements, largely defined itself in contradistinction to what it held to be the characteristic features of the earlier period dominated by the Indian style. The Iranian critics such as Āzar Beg, Raza Quli Khan and Taqi Bahār wrote disapprovingly of the style which they rather pejoratively called the 'Indian Style'. In India, Shibli Naumāni followed his Iranian counterparts in giving an overall negative estimation of this style. Shibli prefers the term *tarz-e tāzah* or 'new style' to *sabk-e hindi* and regards with disfavour its intellectual ingenuity. Echoing the Romantic fallacy which locates the origin of poetry in the intensity of the poet's feelings and evaluates it by its capacity to affect the readers' emotions, he discredited much of the Indian style poetry holding that it was not suitable for the *ghazal* which is essentially a love lyric. To quote Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, "Shibli's disapproval of abstraction, complex metaphoricity, ambiguity and high imaginativeness particularly recalls the prevalent Victorian literary bias against these things."[1] Although Shibli criticized what he called the new style in poetry, he thoroughly discussed Saī’b and Abu Talīb Kalīm, especially the former whom he, in a clear instance of what seems no less than a self-contradiction, regarded as one of the most remarkable poets of the seventeenth century. Shibli, however, righty identified two main features which he thought were typical of the Indian Style, *tamsīl* or exemplification and *īhām* or wordplay. Critical assessment has generally regarded Indian and Indian-domiciled poets the finest practitioners of this style and Shibli too, notwithstanding his somewhat adverse judgment, credits them with refining the ‘new style’.

After suffering neglect and disapprobation for a long time, the poets of *taazah goyi* are now being reconsidered both in Iran and India and the tendency to regard them as preoccupied with artificiality and unhealthy intellectualism is being reconsidered. To take an example, Mirza Abdul Qādir Bedil (1644-1720), of Azimabad, India, a poet whose name has become almost a byword for the complexity of style and who according to many critics is the foremost representative of *taazah goyi*, has recently earned his due share of approbation from Iranian critics. Sā’ib too is now widely recognized as one of the most brilliant poets of his age. His use of metaphors, conceits and other sophisticated poetical devices has found appeal with many modern critics. Paul Losensky remarks thus about Sā’ib:

> Ṣā’eb is best known for his figures of thought. He frequently refers to his *šiva-ye tāza* or “fresh style” and boasts of its *ma‘nā-ye bigāna* (unfamiliar or alien conceit), *ma‘nā-ye rangin* (colorful or variegated idea), and *mażmun-e barjasta* (outstanding conceit). This “poetics of the new”

> prizes the unexpected turn of thought or startling connection between image and idea.[2]

And about the artistic merits of his use of *tamsīl* he writes:

> Ṣāʾeb is particularly renowned for his mastery of a device called *tamt̲il* or *ersāl-e mat̲al*, in which a claim is made in one half of the verse and an exemplum is adduced to support it in the other, as in this opening verse: “When a man grows old, his greed grows young: sleep grows heavy just before the dawn" *(ādami pir čo šod ḥerṣ javān migardad/ k̲vāb dar waqt-e saḥargāh gerān migardad*). This technique produces a compound metaphor, a miniature allegory.[3]

Long before Losensky, the renowned Orientalist E G Browne in his *A Literary History of Persia* had expressed his admiration for Sā'ib in unequivocal terms and attributed it to his brilliant use of various poetic devices.[4]

Not only Sā'ib, but Kalīm too derives his strength from using similes and metaphors in ways which quite often result in delightful poetry.

زود رفت آنکہ ز اسرار جہان آگاہ شد
از دبستان برود ہر کہ سبق روشن کرد

He who learns the mysteries of existence leaves the world forthwith.
When one has learned one’s lessons well,one bids farewell to the school.

از ہنر حال خراباتم نشد اصلاح پذیر

ہمچون ویرانہ کہ از گنج خود آباد نشد
My skill delivers me not from my wretched state.
Like the ruin which does not flourish by the treasure it hides.

با من آمیزش او الفت موجست و کنار
دم بہ دم با من و پیوستہ گریزان از من
Her union with me is like the wave's fondness for the shore.
Always with me, yet ever receding away from me.

Ghani stands out as one of the best practitioners of *taazah goyi* or 'speaking afresh'. Known to his contemporaries and the later critics as a remarkable *mazmun aafreen* or 'creator of fresh meanings', Ghani's verse is especially appealing to the modern reader who readily accepts linguistic and intellectual ingenuity in poetry rather than dismiss them as unsavoury or downright unpoetic. It will be worthwhile to look at some of the verses of Ghani as an illustration of his craftsmanship in the use of poetic image:

کند درپیش آن پای نگارین سجدہا زلفش

بلی کاری بہ از آتش پرستی نیست ہندو را

Her decked vermillion feet; his endless prostrations.
What act, for a Hindu, can excel the worship of fire?

فلک در گردش است از بہرخواب بخت ناسازم
بود در جنبش گہواره راحت طفل بد خو را
The skies are in motion to put my ill-luck to sleep.
The rocking cradle brings comfort to the fretful child.

نیست حسن بی بقا شایستہء دل بستگی
با چراغ برق یک پروانہ همراہی نکرد
Fleeting beauty is unworthy of love.
The lamp of lightning's flash attracts no moth.

از رہ وارستگی پیوستہ همچون گردباد
خانہ بر دوشم نمی باشد غم منزل مرا
Like the whirlwind, I am always free from bonds.
Abode on back, I have no worries of settling down.

بہ گوش ہمین صدا از مقریٔ تسبیح می آید
کہ صد دل مضطرب گردد چو یک دل یابد آرامی
From the teller of beads a whisper comes into my ears.
'A hundred hearts lose their peace to bring solace to one.'

غنی چو سایۂ مرغ پرندہ در شوق
اگر بخاک بیفتم نیفتم از پرواز
Ghani, like the shadow of the bird flying in the course of love
Falling into the dust does not disrupt my flight.

شدم از اختلاط زلف او مشہور در عالم
بر آوردیم آخر از سیاہی چون نگین نامی
The company of her tresses made me famous throughout.
Like the seal's mark that owes its fame to black ink.

These verses, chosen randomly from different *ghazals*, are just a few examples of the delightful use of metaphors and similes which characterize much of poetry practiced by Ghani. As is instantly evident, they bring out a connection between the idea and the image, thereby bringing about a new set of connotations to bear upon the image. They suggest what Wordsworth described as a process of:

> …observation of affinities
> In objects where no brotherhood exists
> To passive minds.[5]

Far from reflecting a lack of organic sensibility which would enable a poet to fuse disparate experiences into an artistic unity, presenting an abstract idea in the first hemistich and following it with a concrete exemplification in the second, creates a fine balance between a direct abstract proposition and its concretization and helps bring a compactly built world of distich or *she'r* into existence. The striking manner of linking thought with image is a way of startling the reader, and wonder, surprise and revelation have always been accepted as important functions of poetry. The technique also foregrounds an aspect of reality which tends to be overlaid with familiarity and custom. In fact, modern criticism has recognized defamiliarization as the primary aim of all poetry. Paul Losensky rightly comments on the significance of *bigana* or unfamiliar poetic meanings:

> *Bigana* suggests the Russian formalist concept of "making it strange" *(ostranenie)*, according to which the power of poetry resides in its ability to disrupt our normal perceptions of literature, language, and reality.[6]

In addition to verses where a poetic proof is presented in the second hemistich of an affirmation stated in the first one of the distich, Ghani also displays a remarkable dexterity in producing verses which are themselves compound or extended metaphors. Some examples are as follows:

کند در بر قدم فریاد خلخال
کہ حسن گلرخان پا در رکابست
At every moment the anklet cries out:
'Beauty, O fair-faced has its feet in the stirrup.'

در طلب بوی تو ای گل عذار
آبلہ پایست ز شبنم بہار
To catch your fragrance, O rosy-cheeked,
The feet of the spring are blistered with dew.

چہ غم ازین کہ بط بادہ سست پرواز است
کہ در گرفتن رنگ پریدن شہباز است
Why grieve if wine's water-bird is slow to take off
In capturing the colour that has fled, it becomes a royal falcon.

روشن ز من جہان و من ازبخت تیرہ داغ
کی سایہء چراغ شود محو از چراغ
I illuminate the world, myself darkened by ill-luck.
How can the lamp rid itself of its shadow?

چو میل سرمہ بر آمد ز چشم جانان گفت
کہ سیر میکدہ شوید غبار خاطر ہا
Coming out of the beloved's eye the kohl stick remarked.
A stroll through the tavern wipes off the dust of thoughts'.

These and many other such verses testify to Ghani's ability to imagine situations which are not just embroidered with certain figurative devices, but where the fundamental imaginative process reveals itself to be metaphorical. The metaphors used, at least in some verses, give the indication of a way of experiencing the facts rather than an embellishment of a prior known fact.

Moreover, fresh poetic meanings can be created from a well-known image only by using it in contexts which bring its different connotative aspects into play. Ghani, working with the conventional repertoire of images of Persian *ghazal*, invests some of them with multiple and often contradictory meanings. An example of this is the image of *habāb* or 'bubble' which is used to suggest diverse ideas in the following verses:

لباس ما سبکساران تعلق بر نمی تابد
بود ہمچون حباب از بخیہ خالی پیرہن مارا
Too flimsy to bear ties are the apparels of the burdenless.
Like an air bubble our robes are without a stitch.

بستہ شد ہر چند در یک بحر معنی ہائ تر
معنئ مردم حباب و معنئ من گوہر است
Though the sea harbours meanings in plenty
Mine is a pearl, theirs' a bubble.

گوش غواص شنید از لب خاموش حباب
دم نگہدار کزین بہ گہری نتوان یافت
The silent lips of the bubble whispered into the diver's ears:
'A pearl more precious you shall never find.'

چو من بہ بحر تجرد کس آشنا نبود
یکی است پیرہن و پوست چون حباب مرا
None fathoms the secret of nakedness like me.
Like the bubble my skin and apparel are one.

بی فہم اگر چشم بدوزد بہ کتاب
نتواند دید روی معنی در خواب
کی غور کنند در سخن بی مغزان
غواصئ بحر نیست مقدور حباب

A dull mind may fix its gaze on the book
Yet meaning shall ever remain beyond his grasp.
Empty-headed fail to fathom the depths
Like a hollow bubble they can never plunge the sea.

افسوس کہ رفت نشہء عہد شباب
سر خوش نشدیم یک دم از بادہء ناب
از بہر تماشای جہان ہمچو حباب
تا وا کردیم چشم رفتیم بہ خواب

Alas! so swiftly did youth's ebriety pass
Before we could savour fully the ruby wine.
We opened our eyes to behold the world
And the bubble burst …

بہ بہر پر خطر عشق چون کشایم چشم
کہ چون حباب نگابی کند خراب مرا

As I open my eyes in love's tumultuous sea
Like a bubble I perish in an instant.

The bubble thus becomes a symbol for such diverse ideas as hollowness, incapacity, lightness, transience, perfection and nakedness.

Among the earlier Persian poets *Īhām*, i.e. *double entendre* or wordplay, were used by Amir Khusraw to achieve great poetical effects. But in the hands of the later poets such as Sa'ib, Kalīm and Ghani, the technique was further refined and used with remarkable dexterity. As S R Faruqi remarks, "wordplay infuses new life into old themes, expands the horizon of meaning, and often makes for an ambiguity of tone which enriches the total feel of the poem."[7] A few examples from Ghani's poetry will illustrate how he employs this device to produce what may be called 'multi-layered poetry.'

از کنارم دختر رز کردتا پہلو تہی
کار من اکنون غنی بطفل اشک افتادہ ہست
Since the daughter of vine has slipped away from my embrace,
I am left to deal with the child of tears.

In this verse the Persian '*dukhtar-e raz*' in the first hemistich denotes wine but literally means 'daughter of vine'. Likewise, *tifl-e ashk* in the second hemistich means both a crying child and a droplet of tear. The verse exploits the double meaning of these words to conjure up two different situations: one in which the speaker laments his separation from wine and says that constant crying is now his lot and the other where he mourns the separation from a woman who has left behind a crying child.

بستہ شد ہر چند در یک بحر معنی ہایٔ تر
معنیٔ مردم حباب و معنیٔ من گوہر است
Though the sea harbours meanings in plenty
Mine is a pearl, theirs' a bubble.

The original for sea is *bahr* which also means metre in which verse is written. The verse simultaneously brings both meanings into play.

نہ دار آخرت نے دار دنیا در نظر دارم
ز عشقت کار چون منصور با دار دگر دارم
Neither this abode I desire nor the next one.
Like Mansur, in your love, I desire one beyond both.

Again, the original *dār* means both abode and gibbet. In the context of the verse both are simultaneously implied, as Mansur by preferring to die on a gibbet also chose an abode beyond this world and the paradise of the orthodox.

ہیچگہ لب نکند باز بہ دشنام رقیب
من بہ تنگ آمد از یار کہ پر بی دہن است
Not once did she open her mouth to curse the rival.
I am fed up with a love so tight-lipped.

bīdahan, translated here as tight-lipped, literally means 'mouthless' and in Persian poetry the smallness of the beloved's mouth is a mark of her beauty which, in keeping with the conventions of hyperbole, is sometimes compared to just a tiny dot. The verse draws on both meanings of *bīdahan,* thus meaning: would that she were not so beautiful to attract the rival; and, would that she had the will to curse him! By this device the poet makes use of a verbal nuance which in the words of William Empson, "gives room for alternative reactions to the same piece of language." [8] Unfortunately, the beauty of punning and wordplay is one among those things which are lost in translation.[9]

Yet another outstanding feature of Ghani is his brilliant use of paradox. As the noted American critic Cleanth Brooks has observed, it is generally, and wrongly, assumed that paradox has no place in poetry. On the contrary, he argues, much of good poetry is fundamentally paradoxical. Brooks and some other New Critics regarded paradox central to poetry because of its ability to embody a truth about reality which a scientific or rational discourse is unable to capture. Reality, in other words, is not wholly amenable to a purely logical analysis and poetry by dealing with its contradictory and paradoxical aspects performs a very important function. Ghani, again, offers fascinating instances of the use of paradox:

جان بہ لب از ضعف نتواند رسید
ما بزور ناتوانی زنده ام
Enfeebled such that the soul finds no way to my lips
The strength of infirmity thus keeps me alive.

گردید راز عشق ز پوشیدن آشکار
دندان بخیہ پردہء ما را دریدہ ہست
Attempting to conceal, I revealed my love's secret.
The teeth of the stitch tore asunder my veil.

تشنہ پا بوس خود زین بیش مگذار آب را
ای نہال باغ حسن از خاک بر آر آب را
How much more will water thirst for a kiss at your feet?
O sapling of the garden of beauty, raise it from dust.

محتسب خواہی کنی بیکار گر خمار را
شیشہ ہای دانہء انگور می باید شکست
Prohibitor! Want to make the wine-maker redundant?
Better that you crush the grape-cups.

دفع شد وسواس خاطر از نماز با حضور
ما بدست بستہ وا کردیم قفل بستہ را
Deep prayer checks the wandering mind.
Many locks are unlocked by locked hands.

It is not difficult to see why Ghani enjoyed a great reputation down to the modern times. If Mir claimed to have honed his skills on Ghani's divan, Iqbal paid rich tributes to him in *Javid*

Namah and *Payam-e Mashriq*, not only as a model of the Islamic ideal of *faqr* or poverty, but also as a master craftsman 'rich in the realm of meaning'. It would be appropriate to conclude this discussion with the following verse of Ghani which illustrates his idea of poetic creation:

بر دم از گوشہء خاطر سر جستن دارد
معنیء تازہ غزالیست کہ بستن دارد

Every moment it seeks to slip from the mind's nook
Fresh poetic meaning is a gazelle to be captured

Notes and References

This paper draws on my work on Ghani published under the title *The Captured Gazelle: Poems of Ghani Kashmiri*. Penguin Publishers, 2013.

[1] S R Faruqi. "A Stranger in The City: The Poetics of *Sabk-e Hindi*." *The Annual of Urdu Studies*. 19:1-93. 2004.

[2] Paul Losensky. "Sāeb Tabrizi" 2003.*EncyclopediaIranica*, On line Edition. http://www.iranica.com

[3] *ibid.*

[4] E G Browne.*A Literary History of Persia*.Vol IV. Reprint Goodword Books. New Delhi. 265-276: 2002.

[5] William Wordsworth. *The Prelude* Book II, lines 384-6.

[6] Paul Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani, Imitation and Poetic Individuality in the Safavid-Mughal Ghazal*, Costa Mesa, CA, 214:1998.

[7] S R Faruqi. "Conventions of Love, Love of Conventions: Urdu Love Poetry in the Eighteenth Century."*The Annual of Urdu Studies*.14:3-32.1999.

[8] William Empson. *Seven Types of Ambiguity*. Penguin Books, Harmondsworth.19: 1961.

[9] I am fully aware that the most difficult challenge facing any translator is to render in translation the subtleties and multivalence which the poet has deliberately cultivated and which account for richness and beauty of his work. This is especially so in case of a poet like Ghani whose verses are multilayered and polysemic (i.e. a word's property of having more than one meaning). Ideally, every verse which exploits multiple meanings of one or more words should be rendered in variant translations but since this is extremely difficult given the conditions governing book publishing these days, I think that a good job is done even if one of the possible meanings is rendered in translation. As for my own practice in *The Captured Gazelle*, I tried to make up for this loss in some ways; for example, by explaining in the introduction how polysemy works in some verses, by combining more than one meaning in the translation where it was possible, and by adding endnotes giving alternate readings to a few verses.

(The author teaches in the Dept of English, the University of Kashmir.)

RISHI-SUFI TRADITION OF KASHMIR

Historical Background and Contemporary Relevance

Er. Vinod Kumar

Introduction

Wendell Phillips, a famous American social reformer, once said, "The heritage of the past is the seed that brings forth the harvest of the future."

It has been seen all over the world that only those societies prosper which are deeply rooted in the past and which take care of their heritage. In fact cultural heritage is the legacy of physical artifacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that is inherited from past generations. Each generation is linked to the past through heritage. Classical civilizations have attributed supreme importance to the preservation of heritage. Ethics says that what has been inherited should be handed over to the successive generations after proper enrichment. What our generation considers a cultural heritage, must be preserved and revived for the next generation and so on.

Intangible heritage includes myths, mythology, legends, folklore, songs, music, dance, drama, traditions, skills, crafts, language, script and knowledge. Transmitting the messages of the great saints, poets and philosophers to the entire society in general and younger generation in particular is the utmost need of the hour.

Kashmir is not only about a land or people; it has been a complete and perfect world in itself since times immemorial. According to the famous Kashmiri poet, Abdul Ahad Azad, most of the wisdom and philosophy of religion and life that the Indian subcontinent is proud of, either has a Kashmir origin or a Kashmir connection. Kashmir has produced great warriors, mystics, saints, poets, philosophers and sages. It is appropriate to present before the world the brighter picture of Kashmir.

Historical background

As per the experts of archeology and mythology, Kashmir was once a bowl-like valley filled with waters and called as *Satisar*. The waters of the huge lake were drained off near Baramulla by the efforts of Kashyap Rishi, an eminent Hindu sage to make it habitable. Soon it became a heaven on earth with deep silence, lush green fields, towering mountains, musical streams, waterfalls, springs, lakes, evergreen forests and snow peaks. Such locations are ideal for meditation. Because of its sacredness the soil of Kashmir became the abode of Hindu saints and sages. Habitation increased on this holy soil. People with different faiths and ideologies came from far off places and settled in this valley. Over a period of time Kashmir became a hub of Indo-Aryan, Iranian and Tibetan civilizations. In the first half of the millennium, Kashmir region was an important centre of Hinduism. Then came Buddhism and flourished in the valley until 8th century. Later in 9th century *Trika Shaivism* arose which became popular as Kashmir Shaivism.

Sufi Islam came to Kashmir in 14th century and Sikhism in 18th century. New faiths and ideologies came to Kashmir but the achievements of previous ones were not lost. Rather the new ideologies were impressed by the prevalent faith of Kashmir. When Sufi Islam reached Kashmir, a large number of its preachers who travelled through Central Asia especially from Iran brought with them the Islamic version of mysticism which was very close if not similar to the local prevalent philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism at that time.

Islamic mysticism preaches oneness of God, His manifestation in everything, and the love for God. These concepts were found to be very close to the local belief and thought process of Kashmir Shaivism. Hence it got blended with the local philosophy, thus producing a unique type of Sufism and Sufi poetry which is very different from the rest of the world. Hence seeing God in everything and loving everything for the sake of God is the central theme of Sufi poetry in Kashmir. The aborigines were imbued with fine qualities of refined culture, cordial relationship, mutual trust and respect for each other's ways of life. With the passage of time a number of Hindu and Sufi saints were produced by Kashmir. A Rishi cult got established in Kashmir that made its inhabitants incline towards peace and harmony. It is in such an atmosphere of blissful tranquility that great spiritualists, Brahmins, Buddhists, Shaivites and Sufis flourished side by side. All this constitutes Kashmiri ethos, popularly known as Kashmiriyat. Thus an atmosphere of composite culture and co-existence developed in Kashmir. In order to cope with the changes brought into the society by the religious and political compulsions, the Rishis of Kashmir vented their voice through mystic poetry.

Lal Ded

Lal Ded, the frontrunner of the mystic poetry in Kashmir says;

sootas te saatas pachhas na rumas
sui mas mea Lalli chov panunui vaakh
andrim gatkaar ratith vollum
tsatith ditmas tatee chaakh

I did not wait for a moment or any auspicious occasion.

I did not let myself remain idle for a fortnight or even for a moment.
Whatever I experienced I converted into my verses.
I grabbed my internal storm and controlled it.
I gave vent to my spiritual experiences and transformed it into my compositions.

Through her Vaakhs, Lal Ded connected with people of all hues and shades across all religions. She championed the cause of the human being in general and not of a particular class and religion. That is what makes her great in Kashmiri literature. Even after seven hundred years of her existence, her Vaakhs continue to guide and inspire people across religions and classes. Lal Ded, a Shaiva Yogini of the Kashmir school of Shavisim, recognized the external world as an illusion and the human body as a vehicle for spiritual growth. Lal's Vaakhs were equally acceptable to Hindus and Muslims. In her Vaakhs people read the message of communal harmony and peace. Lal Ded has been a pioneer, rather instrumental in establishing common spirituality and composite culture based on tolerance and mutual trust amongst Kashmiris. She says

Shiv chhui thali thali rozaan
mo zaan hyond ta musalmaan
trukkai chhukh ta panun paan parzaan
soi chhai saahibas zaani zaan

God (Shiva) abides everywhere.
Do not discriminate between a Hindu or a Muslim.
If you are truly sensible, recognize your own self.
It will help you achieve the eternal truth of acquaintance with God.

The Rishi order of Kashmir is a tradition associated with mysticism and religious harmony. The Rishi order has made an important contribution to Kashmiriyat, the ethnic, social and cultural consciousness of the Kashmiri people. It is an indigenous secularism of Kashmir. The original Rishis were focused on seclusion and emphasis on meditation. They possessed simplicity and were without pretence. They abused no one. They restrained their desires. Most of them refrained from eating flesh, remained away from married life and planted trees so that other people may benefit from them.

Nund Rishi

Nund Rishi is considered to be the founder of the Rishi order of saints which deeply influenced many well-known mystics of Kashmir. Through his mystic poetry he became so popular that he was bestowed with the respected names of Shaikh-ul-Alam or Alamdaar-e- Kashmir, etc. During his lifetime, he witnessed many conversions in the valley. Various historical events helped to shape his mind in such a manner that he produced some works of philosophy in his own manner of verses and poetry. Nund Rishi was deeply affected by such events and this is apparent in his verses. He felt disgusted with the ways of the world. He decided for renunciation and went to caves for meditation. He says

shraana karizi yuth na kanh denshee
dhyaana karizi gupith paan
kriya karizi yuth na zaath mashee
mashee nishi ada panun paan

Bath in such a way that nobody sees you.

Worship Him while staying away from the eyes of public.
Work in such a way that you don't forget to act.
Then you will forget your existence.

It is said that he lived for twelve years in the wilderness. And when he came out, he used his poetry as tool to spread the knowledge of absolute. His secular views have impressed the Kashmiri people of all faiths. His poetry is commonly known as *Shruks,* a short form of Sanskrit word *Shaloka.* His closeness with God is expressed in the following Shruk;

su mea nishey, bu tas nishey
mea tas nishey qaraar aav
nahkai tchhoundum mea pardeeshey
paneney deeshey mea yaar aav

He is near me and I am near Him
I found peace near Him
It was my futile exercise to search for Him in the external world
Because I found my beloved God in my own internal world.

Nunda Rishi was an outstanding exponent of the Rishi cult in Kashmir. He travelled across the length and breadth of Kashmir to deliver his message and to strengthen the Rishi order. This order believed in public service along with meditation in isolated places or solitude away from worldly affairs. He believed in simplicity. He says;

ath kandi paanas mo di rando
ami saeti band mal vothee no
ami tasbeeh aas te jando
ami kand su athi yiyee no

Don't decorate yourself with artificial makeup.
It will not clean your dirt.
Mala, stick and clothes are false.
You will not be able to find Him through these things.

Through most of his verses Nund Rishi addresses mankind in general rather any particular community. He believed in moral preachings for the upliftment of human beings and harmonious social living. When he talks of one God with numerous names, he gives a clear indication of a multi-religious society where ways and methods may differ, rituals or customs may vary, but all routes or faiths lead to one supreme power who is the maker or owner of the entire world. He found God in everything around. He says;

akoy khwada naav chhis lachha
zikri rus kanh kachha mo
vumbri vyandun akoy pachha
rizke rus kanh maechha mo

There is only one God and he is known by lakhs of names
No variety of grass is without a name
Consider life as one fortnight
There is not even an insect (fly) without food

On the concept of Oneness (Unity of Existence), Nund Rishi says;

kunirey bozakh kuni no rozakh
aem kuniran koutah dyut jalaav
aqel te fikar tour kot soazakh

kaem maali cheth hyok su dariyaav

Once you understand what oneness (unity of existence) is, you will forget everything.
That oneness has created fire (passion) in me
How could you carry your wisdom and knowledge there?
Who could drink that river of oneness?

Nund Rishi focused on meditation. He says;

sui oas te sui ho aasee
sui sui karizi tsei
sui saeree andesh kaasee
hayo zuv paayas peto

He was and He will be.
Keep on reciting His name.
He will clear your all ignorance.
Oh living being, search for the ways to recognize Him.

In the entire subcontinent, Jammu and Kashmir has the richest reservoir of the Sufi traditions. Sufism in Kashmir imbibed Hindu and Buddhist influences. This is particularly true of the indigenous order of the Rishis. Tombs of Sufi saints draw devotees of all faiths. It is a unique form of devotional culture in Kashmir. Nund Rishi used his poetry as a tool to spread the knowledge of Sufism, peace and harmony. He preached the accountability before God, fear of God, commitment to the principles of truth, equality, justice and devotion in the service of mankind. We learn from him the fulfillment of duties of life with honesty, simplicity and truthfulness.

The sufi concept of the Omnipresence and all pervading nature of God is analogous to the science of totality or *KULA* system of Kashmir Shaivism in essence wherein truth of totality shines everywhere. Nund Rishi says;

yus chhui yeti sui chhui tatey
sui chhui prath shaayi ratith makaan
sui chhui pyaade te su chhui rathai
sui chhui soarui gupith paan

He who is here, is there.
He is present everywhere.
He is soldier and He is chariot.
He is hidden in everything.

When Nund Rishi left this world, his passing away created a big void in Kashmir. But his legacy was carried forward by the following saint poets of Kashmir.

Social harmony breathes balm, heals wounded hearts and germinates the seeds of love and affection. Roop Krishen Bhat, in his book *Communal Harmony in Kashmiri Literature,* mentions that the concern and passion of love for humanity without any bias for language, region and religion is very prominent in many scholarly writings of Kashmiris. Right from the poetry of Lal Ded to Nund Rishi to Mahjoor and Azad and upto the present day poets, all have sung songs of communal harmony, love and concern for man and humanity. We have Muslim poets singing Bhakti songs and Hindu poets singing naats. Kashmiri literature has shown path of humanity to people in general.

The biggest contribution of Nund Rishi is that he acted as a torch-bearer and trend-setter for the future generations of Rishi-Sufi traditions of Kashmir. They carried forward the legacy of the legendary saint, poet and philosopher of Kashmir. This is reflected in their poetry. Prof. M H Zaffar in his book *Prazenatch Hund Gaash* mentions that the Sufi Rishis were certainly aware of yogic practices of Kashmir. Starting from the fourteenth century and upto first half of the twentieth century we have a galaxy of Sufi poets like Momin Saeb, Shah Qalander, Sochhi Kral, Nyama Saeb, Shamas Faqir, Wahab Khaar, Ahmed Batwari, Waza Mehmood, Ahad Zargar, Rehman Dar, Samad Mir, Rhim Saeb, Shah Gafoor and a host of others who apart from Sufism also expressed about the indigenous Shaiva Philosophy or shastra of Kashmir. Through their poetry they have championed the cause of spirituality, humanity, brotherhood and equality. They have shown the way to realize God. Even the concepts of Buddhism are hidden in their poetry.

Relevance in the contemporary world

The Rishi-Sufi traditions of Kashmir have great relevance in the contemporary world. While we are facing the challenges of radicalization, extremism, population explosion and environmental issues at the global level, the Rishi-Sufi traditions of Kashmir can act as a guiding philosophy for the world. They give an inspiration to live with peace and harmony, reminding us of our moral responsibilities. One of the most famous and oft quoted couplets of Nund Rishi is;

ann poshi teli yeli wann poshi

Food will last as long as forests last.

This is by far the greatest environmental message given by any philosopher of the world. These words are a clear indication of his innate foresight and intuitive knowledge. He uttered these words about 600 years ago, even before the present concept of ecological balance was born. He cautioned people on moral and ethical grounds against damages to or destruction of plants and trees. For he is believed to have pointed out that plants are living things which are born, grow and die in due course.

The poetry of Nund Rishi gives inspiration to youths for hard work in spiritual as well as public life. He says

yus kari gongul sui kari kraav
He, who ploughs the field, reaps the crop.

He further says;

Kya kari tasnz krei ta kaaran
yas beyis atha daarun peyi

What can a person achieve through his work
if he begs in front of others.

Nund Rishi believes in facing hardships and difficulties on the path to any destination. This he expresses in the following shrukh;

tsaalun chhai vuzmal ta tratai
tsaalun chhui mandinyen gatkaar
tsaalun chhui parbatas karni atai
tsaalun chhui manz athas hyon naar
tsaalun chhui paan panun kadun gratai
tsaalun chhui khyon veh te gaar

Be ready to bear the lightening and cloudbursts.

Be ready to bear sudden darkness at noon.
Be ready to carry the mountain on your back.
Be ready to bear the fire on your palm.
Be ready to crush your body between two grinding wheels.
Be ready to have poison and bitter things in your mouth.

Apart from the mystic poetry we can see some eye-opening verses of Nund Rishi which are related to day to day life, but have deep philosophical meaning. He says;

kyah kari dandeh rus doonis
kyah kari ranis teer kamaan
kyah kari mokhtehaar hoonis
kyah kari anis padmaan

Of what use is walnut to a person without teeth.
Of what use is bow and arrow for a handicapped.
Of what use is a necklace for a dog.
Of what use is a beautiful lady to a blind.

Kashmir's rich heritage has social, religious and cultural dimensions with Rishi-Sufi traditions. There is a dire need to promote and popularize the understanding of Rishi-Sufi traditions and the underlying messages in larger sociological ambit. There is a need to make common masses especially the youth aware about the relevance of these teachings in the contemporary and unfolding times. We should give a clear message to the world that dark periods have come in the history of Kashmir in the past as well, but every time Kashmir has come out of the black clouds. Every time Kashmir progressed ahead. Bright times have come with the blessings of great saints and sages of Kashmir. Times keep changing; it is the law of the nature. Lal Ded says

nai rozi vandha tai nai retkoului
nai bozi shraavnun peth kastoor
nai rozi khushi tai nai rozi maatam
nai vazi sahlias saaz santoor

Neither will winter last long nor will summer.
Nor will the monsoon bird Kasturi sing for ever.
Neither will happiness last long nor will sorrow.
The musical instruments of celebrations will not play for ever.

Kashmir has lived proudly through the traditions of communal harmony and co-existence for thousands of years, despite many religious, political, natural and man-made upheavals. It has a praiseworthy and glorious tradition of co-existence not only amongst different kinds of people but even between humans and beasts like Nagas, Yakshas and Pisachas in the earliest times of existence of Kashmir.
Lal Ded says;

assi aes ta assi aasav
assi dore kari patavath
Shivas sori na zyon ta marun
ravas sori na atagath

Together we existed in the past and together we will exist in future also.
We will survive as we have been surviving from ancient times to the present.
Shiva never ceases to born and die.
The Sun never ceases to rise and set.

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(The author is a writer of note, presently based in Jammu.)

AUREL STEIN

FORGOTTEN HISTORIAN OF KASHMIR

Iqbal Ahmad

European missionaries have participated in the overall development of Kashmir in past. They once provided a model of administration and had been appointing their resident commissioners to monitor the political and administrative affairs of this land and its people. They founded the first modern educational and medical institutions, where locals were provided these services.

They were the first to study the Kashmir history and culture and initiated historical and archaeological research in Kashmir studies. They identified ancient scripts and deciphered the ancient words. They translated the ancient Sanskrit manuscripts of Kashmir and made Kashmir history known to the entire world.

Of those European travelers, Stein has been one of the most popular scholars who first translated the manuscript of Kalhana's Rajtarangni into English and made Kashmir history known to its people. He became the first historian of Kashmir, who wrote the first history of this land. He decoded the ancient Sharda script and translated the classical Prakrit and Sanskrit words into simple Roman alphabet.

Sir Mark Aurel Stein was a Hungarian born in Budapest on November 26, 1862. It is said that from the very beginning he had a deep interest in touring and studying Eastern culture. For this purpose, Stein is said to have achieved degrees in several disciplines of Eastern history and culture from leading European universities and later worked on a doctorate in the same field.

In 1885 he got an opportunity to visit the then British India where he got the job of a principal in the Lahore College. It was from here that Stein started his mission of research and went to nearby Bunar area to examine the scattered remnants and debris of ancient Undayana Empire, which were scattered on its beautiful landscape.

In 1901, Central Asian plains attracted the passions of Stein. He spent a good time in Khotan and studied the material culture of the region. He came across a collection of ancient artifacts, manuscripts and Tibetan antiquities.

He studied the material properly and put forth his observations in his book *Ancient Khotan* in 1907. In this book he also brought to light the ancient links of Khotan with other contemporary cultures. He felt the imprints of sub-continent on its culture and history.

Stein made extensive archaeological research in Balochistan and discovered several ancient settlements. His discovery of Mahaban was a remarkable one. For his high expertise Stein was again recommended for Central Asian survey and in 1906, he made a historic discovery at Tunhang that consisted of the remains of western portion of the Great Wall of China. Incidentally in 1900, when the doors of one of the caves of the wall got opened, a big collection of manuscripts and paintings made on silk cloth were recovered. China took the major portion of this collection. Stein could, however, get access to study several of these manuscripts.

In 1915, Stein went to Russia and from here moved to Samarqand, Khurasan and Seistan. He made a detailed survey of these states and came across ancient settlements and remains of Buddhist monasteries and Stupas on the mountain passes of Seistan. He conducted extensive research on its typography, geography, archaeology, history and culture and published his findings in a four-volume book.

After surveying the bordering regions to Kashmir, his main emphasis was Kashmir for which he had a great curiosity. He made several visits to this land and finally settled at Mahind Marg, and he made it a research lab. Mahind Marg was the place where Stein used to study and compile his travel notes. The place is situated in the lap of Harmukh. "It was this place that Stein had desired to be buried in", as recorded by his Kashmiri Pandit friend Ramchand Bali. However, Stein died in Afghanistan and is buried there in Kabul's Christian graveyard.

In fact, George Buhler's memorable tour of Kashmir in 1875 had resulted in the discovery of valuable material for a systematic study of the history of Kashmir. He primarily got engaged in collection and examination of old Sanskrit and Persian manuscripts. He gave graphic and accurate notes of some old sites in the valley which he had visited himself.

In his tour report he had indicated the manner in which a thorough study of Kalhana's Rajatarangni and historical typography of Kashmir was undertaken. It won't be wrong to say that Arul Stein followed Buhler's methods in his research on Kashmir.

Stein was in Lahore when he desired to have a genuine manuscript of Rajtarangni. For this purpose he arrived in Kashmir in 1888 and succeeded in the discovery of 17th century copied manuscript of Kashmir chronicle written by Ram Kanth.

Stein was very well conversant with Sanskrit, Persian, Kashmiri, Pashtu and English. He could also decipher the ancient scripts like Greek, Arabic, Kharaoshti, Brahmi and Sharda and translate them. During the translation of Rajtarangni, Stein is said to have studied not only Kanth's manuscript but even had on the spot investigation of various historical sites and remains of Kashmir. And so identified several names recorded in corrupt form in Rajtarangni.

It was really a very difficult task for a foreigner to study Rajtarangni and to trace out the various historical events, sites and dates from the chronicle and identify those on the ground. In the words of late Moti Lal Saqi, "The role of Stein in the restoration of Kashmir history and cultural heritage is extraordinary which in itself is as the foundation as the sum of the researches. If there had been no Stein, the Kak and Sufi accounts would have remained incomplete."

Kashmir served as the first milestone in Stein's research pursuits. That is why he was in deep love with Kashmir. Stein in his accounts has made mention of it: "After several Central Asian expeditions, I could get time and peace in my beloved mountain valley of Kashmir to rethink and study those investigations and observations which I had made in my re-searches of those far flung areas. There was no change in my love for Kashmir."

Stein used to spend his summer vacations in Kashmir and visit and investigate the archaeological sites here. Besides, he took keen interest in learning Kashmiri language and literature. With the help of his Kashmiri friend Govind Koul, he could consolidate and compile *Hatim's Tales*, a collection of tales. These were narrated to him by one Hatim Teli, a professional storyteller.

Stein had also visited Gilgit and identified and deciphered several human records on the mountains of Hunza and other places. These records were in the shape of human and animal carvings and descriptions were given in Kharoshti and Brahmi epigraphs. He could decipher names of several Kushan and Kidar princes on its rock edicts.

The modern Kashmiri historians and researchers shall not forget this legendary historian who laid the foundation of Kashmir historiography.

(The author is a noted writer and archivist, based in Kashmir.)

CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES AND FEMALE EDUCATION IN KASHMIR (1846-1947)

Dr Shiraz Ahmad Dar
Dr Heena Majeed

Introduction

The valley of Kashmir from ancient times is said to have been the seat of Sanskrit learning and 'from this small valley issued master-pieces of history, poetry, romance, fable, and philosophy'.[1] It remained for centuries the house of great Sanskrit scholars. Some of the greatest Sanskrit poets were born here who wrote in the valley and from it issued forth in the Sanskrit language world-famous collection of folklore.[2]

With the advent of Muslim rule, Islamic influence penetrated into the Kashmir Valley. The establishment of Muslim rule saw the promotion of learning both in Persian and Sanskrit languages.[3] It was during their rule that *maktabs* and *madrassas* were founded. It is said that Sultan Zainul-ul-Abidin founded *Dar-ul-Ulam* or University at Naushar, his capital. The university founded by Zain-ul-Abidin, flourished under a great and eminent scholar Mullah Kabir Nehvi, who was well known for his learning and piety. This great scholar was assisted by a large number of professors and lecturers attached from different parts of the world. He sent out agents to different parts of the world to secure books and manuscripts for his library.[4]

During this period, the Muslims of Kashmir received education through three-fold agencies, viz. *maktabs* (private houses which were generally attached to mosques), *madrasas* and *khanqahs* (mostly attached to mosques).[5] The students in all these kinds of educational institutions were taught to read Arabic so that they were able to recite the verses of Quran, but not necessarily to understand it. These *maktabs* used to impart recitation of Quran and no attempt was made to improve the morals of students.[6]

After the end of Muslim rule, the patronage of Muslim institutions by ruling class ended automatically. The valley of Kashmir which was at its pinnacle in every sphere of life up to the Mughal rule, did not remain the same after the said rule. After the end of Mughal reign, Kashmir came under the rule of Afghans, then came the Sikhs and after them the Dogras of Jammu[7].

Credit goes to Maharaja Pratap Singh, in whose rule modern education in the state took shape. He established schools on the syllabus pattern of the Punjab University. It was also in his reign that due attention was paid towards the education of Muslims of the Kashmir Valley.[8] Though the Christian missionaries tried their best to make an improvement in the society of Kashmir, especially in the educational field of Muslims, unfortunately by that time Muslims were not in favour of any kind of educational change. They remained attached to their traditional culture and conservative theology of Islam. Their opposition of modern education became the main cause of the sufferings of poor Muslims. The conservative outlook of Muslims and their orthodox nature made them more backward than other communities of the state. It was due to their own backwardness that they were even ignored by the Government in the field of education. When talking about the status of female education in Kashmir, it presented almost a blank-sheet in that respect. The Muslims were more conservative and hateful towards the education of their girls. It was general belief among the Muslim community that it is a sin to eat or drink a drop of water in a family that had among inmates a girl above ten or twelve years of age, still un-married.[9]

The result of this conservative outlook of Muslim community in the Kashmir Valley was the negligence of female education. The most educated girl in those days was regarded one who could read *Quran*— it was the secondary question whether she knew it's meaning or not. This custom was prevalent only among few well-to-do families.[10]

The parents were also of opinion that their son was their prospective bread-winner, while daughter would get married and leave the home forever. They thought it was their duty as well as responsibility to bring up a daughter with care till she attained the age of ten or twelve years and then to marry her. With her marriage, they thought they completed their duty towards their daughters. Education of girls was neglected for another reason also. It was a matter of choice for parents whether they should send son or daughter to the school. Backwardness, prejudice, poverty and false sense of morality forbade many parents to get their daughters educated. Muslims especially were not ready to send girls to school and were hostile to co-education.[11] In view of the social orthodoxy, the parents held back the daughters and sent their sons to schools. The parents were generally poor and possessed limited resources as such it was a luxury for them to educate even their sons. They supposed it to be an asset on the completion of education as son would be believed to be earning for the family. It was only at the end of nineteenth century that education of girls passed from the stages of ridicule and indifference to that of the eager activity.

Kashmir society and education of girls

Female education was not considered mandatory for the society in the nineteenth century. The idea that girls should receive education outside their homes never found place in the Indian society.[12] General feeling among most of the Hindu families was that a girl taught to read and write, will soon after marriage become a widow. A woman was considered 'born in ignorance and must die in ignorance'. Ignorance except in religion, legend, love and domestic matters was regarded as a women's natural lot.[13] Same was the case with the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, because people of the part of British India were more backward, conservative and poorer than the people of the sub-continent. It was but natural that this much under-developed hilly state of Jammu and Kashmir, should have presented almost a blank-sheet in that respect. In every 1000 of the female population only on was literate in 1901, three in 1921 against respectively in 9 and 23 in India.[14] As already mentioned above, it was general belief among the Muslim community of the Kashmir Valley that it is a sin to eat or drink a drop of water in a family that had among its inmates a girl above ten or twelve years of age still un-married. So, the Muslim community used to talk ill if their co-religionists who wanted to educate their daughters, and used to cut off their relations with those parents who were in favour of female education. The result of this conservative outlook of Muslim community was the negligence of female education.

No doubt, there must have been very few Muslim girls in the Valley who were able to read and write any particular language and that too in case of those ladies who were able to recite verses from the Holy Quran— a custom which was prevalent among the well-to-do and cultured Muslim families.[15] It was must for the parents to ignore the education of their daughters. It was thought that women's place is in home.

Obstacles in way of female education

There were several factors which hindered the progress of education among girls. Firstly, *Purdah* system was most predominant. It debarred women in the adolescent age from attending the school. Although girls' face was hidden by the dirty *burkas* they wore, no one considered tall was allowed out before she was married.[16] Early marriage was another serious obstacle for as soon as girls attained marriageable age, their nuptials had to be performed which automatically caused a halt to their further education.[17] The third and the most important factor was the conservative attitude of the people and their general indifference. In her yearly Report, Miss Violet B Fitze reported that they had to face good deal of opposition for coming to the Mission Schools'.[18] The fourth cause which hindered the path of girl's education was the lack of teachers. It often happened that schools sanctioned by the Government remained unopened for want of staff. There was a sizeable section of orthodox Muslims who were not only indifferent, but actively opposed to the female education. C.E. Tyndale Biscoe wrote in 1922, "It is women who at present more than man hinder the progress; they are very conservative because of their ignorance and superstitions and are far more under the power of ignorant priests than the man".[19]

Christian missionaries and female education

To know about the education of females in Kashmir, it seems necessary to know as to how, when and by whose efforts the first girl's school in British India was founded. Blind faith, conservatism, distrust of futuristic ideas and the total absence of girl's schools and female teachers have been the worst impediments to the spread of women's education in India. The confines of the hearth were the loftiest that a woman could aspire for under circumstances. The trespass, that is when this sanctum sanctorum was violated, took place around 1849 A.D[20]. It was in the month of May of that year that a female school was started by Mr. Drinkwater Bethune, a foreigner in the city of Calcutta. The foundation stone of the building was laid in November 1850 A.D by Sir Litter, the then Deputy Governor of Bengal. The school was renamed as "Bethune School". In the year 1851 A.D at the demise of its founder who had bequeathed his whole property to the school. This particular period registered yet another landmark in the history of female education in this country. Women's claim to schooling was accorded official recognition by the government of the land. The Bengal Council of Education was asked to take up the superintendence of the girls' schools and to spread of modern education. Whenever any disposition was shown by the Indians to establish girl's schools, it was the duty of Bengal Council of education to give them all possible encouragement and to further their plans in every way. Malkajpet Girls School in Hyderabad started in 1881 was one of the earliest Muslim girls school in India[21].

The success of Missionaries in both medical and educational fields encouraged them to take up the cause of female education in Kashmir. Until the close of the first half of the nineteenth century, female education was the child of no one but of Missionaries. The Missionaries left no stone unturned in attracting girls to their schools. "Missionaries have done more for women's education in this country than government itself" says Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy in an address to "All India Women's Conference"[22].

To the Missionaries, education of girls was of utmost importance, for the girls would be the mothers of future generation. No educated mother would allow her children to remain un-educated. Since the boys were being educated and having their minds liberated from the clutches of superstitions, it was earnestly felt by the Missionaries that they should have likeminded wives, instead of having to marry ignorant and indisciplined girls, who would remain a drag on them, and whom they often termed animals[23]. The Missionaries realised that no stable, and certainly no Christian community could be built up under conditions where women were incompetent to "teach the young and heal the sick".[24] No one can deny the fact that Missionaries did extremely valuable pioneering work in the field of education of women— a dangerous area in which the officials of this period refused to tread wives of Missionaries and some women Missionaries took the lead in this matter and began to work for the spread of education among women. With the consultation of a few of their bolder acquaintances, the ladies decided to open a girl's school in Srinagar. Such a thing was unheard of in the "God forsaken lands", and even a suggestion to educate girls was sure to arouse suspicion and invite trouble[25].

In Srinagar, the first C.M.S school was opened in 1894, by a Christian Missionary lady, but it was, of course, by no means popular, for it was initiated by a foreign lady. Instead of fostering a desire amongst the people to educate their girls, it was on the other hand calculated to engender suspicion and retard the progress of female education and this opening of girl's school shocked the people of Srinagar. There were murmurs and whispers in the street with people thinking that Missionaries aimed at polluting the minds of young girls with impure ideas.[26]. The girls who were brave enough were very timid, and their parents were somewhat on shake, as public opinions were very much against them.[27] Persuasion, blandishment and appeal to sense of patriotism were utilized to prepare some parents for admitting their tiny girls in it. A few students were enrolled who attended the first class, on the eve of first prize distribution ceremony of the school; some European ladies were invited to attend the function by the lady superintendent. This she thought would encourage the girls and their parents. All the girls were assembled in the school when, on the appearance of the English lady visitors, some mischief-mongers on finding a fertile ground for their activities sedulously spread lies to harm the new born institution. They shouted out that the Europeans had come to kidnap the girls. Others took up the cry and ran to the school windows, told their girls to escape by jumping from the windows, the men below catching them as they fell[28]. This episode resulted in the closure of the first girl's school for some time. It was only sometime after 1894 that the second girls school was opened and attached to the Srinagar C.M.S. High School where the sisters of boys of school received education. Surprisingly, the school registered an increase in the number of girls. Notable Missionary women who served in this school were Miss. E.G. Hull, Miss. Fitze, Miss. Gomery and Miss. Mallinson.[29]

After these efforts of Christian Missionaries, we find awareness growing among the people. Parents began to think that their daughters were as much a part of their duties as the education of their sons who had begun demanding educated wives.

Impact of modern education

Society of Kashmir, as a whole, beame aware of the fact that education of girls is more important than that of boys, because to educate a man is to educate an individual, while to educate a woman is to educate a whole family.[30]

The Muslims of the valley of Kashmir upto the nineteenth century were completely against education. After their awareness which awakened them from the deep slumber, they began to send letters to Maharaja for establishment of schools exclusively for Muslim girls.[31] Girls began to take more interest in education. By 1916A.D the girls were seen "coming better than ever before and mothers actually eager about their learning[32]". The Muslim parents began to send their daughters for the acquisition of knowledge. In her school Report of 1918, Miss. Fitzesays mentions that, "the large number attending are Mohammadans, Hindus need much persuading, and we have only thirty-eight on the books. . . . One Hindu girl only we have been able to keep up to the age of fourteen."[33] We find society undergoing a healthy change. Mr. Biscoe, who played very important rule in the spread of education in the Kashmir Valley, remarked, "the education of girls is progressing much faster than that of boys did at its commencement, and I believe that atmosphere of city will be changed beyond all conceptions, when the mothers of this rising generation have been educated, for it is they and the priests who are great stumbling blocks on the road to light and truth at present."[34]

The people, who up to that time opposed any steps taken by the government or Missionaries for the spread of female education, forced the government to take steps to popularise education among girls. Because they realised that it is only education which could guide and become a torch to their daughters in darkness, so that they may not suffer in the homes of their in-laws and may not be treated as animals and slaves by their educated husband. The State Education Department provided primary, Middle and High Schools. Also, women's welfare Trust was formed in 1927. Government began to take keen interest in female education as in the Administrative Report we find, "advancement of female education is receiving the best attention of the Durbar".[35] To attract more and more girls to school, ten scholarships were provided for girls willing to study in college of British India at Rs. 40 per month each during the year 1929-1930 A. D.[36]

To conclude, it was because of the efforts of the Christian missionaries and then the Government steps which forwarded the upliftment of female education in a big way.

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(The authors teach in the Department of History, the University of Kashmir Srinagar.)

LAMA-DANCE-DRAMA

In the context of ancient theatre

Shabir Sarwar Malik H

Surely the contribution of Jayadeva, the 18th century singer-poet who authored Geet-Govinda, the opera-cum-ballet on the love-tale of lord Krishna & cowherd maidens, can't be denied but prior to 7th century the great Indian dramatists like Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti existed in India. The former contributed plays like *Abhi-jnana-Shukuntala;* inspired by a story in the Mahabharata and latter created *Mahavira-charita* ; as well as *utter-Rama-Charita* ; both based on the epic Ramayana. Ultimately, *Natya-Shastra,* the treatise which is said to have laid all chief elements like dance, music, characterisation, acting, gestures, costuming, dramatic construction, theatrical practices, stage-craft, architecture, etc., came up in this land of ours.

Ancient Indian theatre was performed in temples by priests wherein classification, viz *Nayika, Nayak, Vidushaka* (jester), *Sutradhaar* (stage-manager-cum-narrator), is believed to have been introduced for the first time. In later stages, under royal patronage, drama developed as professional actors polished their acting skills (*abhinaya).* By 7th century and before 10th century, great theatre developed fully in India. After a lull, Indian theatre is again said to have been enriched from 14th century to 18th century, by the folk theatre of India e:g *Bhavai* of Gujrat, *kuti-yattam Jatra* of Bengal, *kathakali* of Kerala and *Swang* of *Haryana/UP and Yakshagana* (puppet show) of Karnataka .

Readers may be reminded of the *Baand Paetherr* of Kashmir too here.

Indian theatre, both Sanskrit and Prakrit is dated back to BC, initially, in rudimentary forms like earliest dialogue-hymns that later flowered in the shape of Dance-Dramas-cum Story-recitation, encompassing dramatic narration, dance and music with featured textual, dramatic effects.

It has to be accepted that music, dance and drama had gained popularity in India during 11-14 centuries AD. Thus the existence of Theatre Enclosures, *Natak Mandapa,* in Hindu temples that served as an important adjunct and were used as community-centres as well as places of worship, proves that theatre-tradition in India existed almost from antiquity. Some writers state that in the Indian mythological plays of rural India 'ritualistic worship' or 'obeisance (*Ranga-Puja*), 'introductory verses, music & dance' (*Purva Ranga)* was performed prior to the main performance, in front of the 'holy altar'. Masks made of papier-mache, wood, clay, etc., were also used often.

Imagine the performance proceeding at a leisurely pace, in accompaniment of music, dance and gestures, with interlude by 'Clown' (*Vidushaka).*

In the whole Himalayan area, rich traditions of monastery dramas are said to have evolved over a long course.

Tibet had its share of formalised folk dance among sedentary agriculturists. Folk tales about legendary and historical heroes and Buddhist Canonical Literature of Tibet could be the source of *ache-lhamo,* the morality plays of Tibet in which masks were used. Patron saint, also known as 'Mad Yogi', Thongton Gyalpo, is said to have realised, through his Tibetan Opera style (*Lhamo*), that dramatised religious teachings had greater influence. The Buddhist *Jatakas* (written from 6th to 2nd century BC) are morally instructive stories in whose dramatization, main characters often are 'animals'. The *Natas* that are said to be mentioned in Jataka Books were wandering minstrels. Later, tropes associated with village monasteries performed in the plays when gradually the dictum 'forbidding music & dance (for entertainment) to monks' was diluted by time.

Out of many great figures of the Buddhist world, the one that I would like to mention here is: Asvaghosha, (probably of 1st century AD, considered as the greatest expounder-cum-systematiser of the Mahayana School of Buddhism (Teg-pa-Chenpo); who was the first propounder of the 'Shuniya Theory' (Stongpa-nyid) and rendered commentaries of the Mahayana scriptures), is said to have written, around 1st Century AD, lyrical poems, out of which the Tibetan lyrical dramatic pieces,' Poesy', is said to have evolved. Nonetheless one should be open to the idea that Indian & Tibetan theatre might have been mutually benefited.

It is true, centuries before the birth of Lord Christ, the theatre of Athens, revolving around Greek mythology was played in open-air-theatres wherein costumes, voice, gestures and masks, etc., were employed, and in which genres like tragedy, comedy, satire existed. In Greek theatre not only one hears about great playwrights like Aeschylus (Prometheus Bound), Sophocles (The Oedipus Trilogy), Euripides (Hercules), etc., but quite interestingly it is said in the city of Dionysia (Athens), during the Dionysiac spring festival, rituals performed were accompanied by chorus, music & dance; and metrical spoken words were employed in the Phallic songs. Above all, ponder on the name of the Roman god of theatre, Dionysos.

Roman theatre too has a history of its own and it is said we owe pantomime to Romans. It is of particular interest that in Roman mythology, the chief god, Jupiter, lord of Heaven and earth, sky & thunder, (*Brahaspati* in Sanskrit, biggest planet in our solar system), is said to have figured in some post-plague pacification-ritualistic Roman plays.

It is contended that the Greeks influenced Roman as well as Hellenistic theatres. Some hold the opinion that Greeks around Alexander's time, even contributed towards ancient Indian theatre. Yet it is apt to remember that around 315 BC, king Chandra Gupta drove out Seleukus(the Greek ruler of Indus province), married his sister, whereby was born Ashoka Vardhana Piyadasi (the great propagator of Buddhism whose empire included Kashmir as well. Around 150 BC Kashmir came under the rule of Greek Meander, who, it is believed, became a Buddhist. (Coins of Meander exist in SPS Museum of Srinagar, if my memory serves me right.) The role of Greek theatre in modern theatre around the globe cannot be denied; including in British India of post-1860; as well as 20th century theatre.

Ladakh is the living repository of a form of Buddhism, popularly called Lamaism and it is a land of living, soaring monasteries, *Gompas.* As is well-known, the Prince of Sakiya tribe of the mini-republic of Kapilvastu (now in Nepal), Lord Siddhartha Gautama Buddha (named by some as 'Yuna Thundop'), attained *Pari-nirvana at Bodh Gaya*, India, in 6th century BC and bequeathed the world a ' religion called Buddhism; that over the time came to be known as Lamaism in Tibet/Ladakh.

Lama-dance-dramas are performed in the Gompas of Ladakh, chiefly on different festivals. They are almost in their entirety an import from Tibet but in all probability it must have originated in the Pre-Buddhist-Devil-Dancing-Cult of *Bon-chos* and Chinese opera may have exerted some influence but undeniably the structure of the Tibetan-Dance-Drama according to many writers is said to be of Indian origin; the benediction at the beginning of the play, before the Buddhist Altar; the dance of the 'Six Singers of Good Wishes' *(bkra-shis-zhol-pa)* wearing the mask of the hunter (*rngon-pa*). But the make-up, the formalised gestures and the 'minor' parts seem closer to Chinese Opera.

In the Dance-Dramas-of Ladakh that are called *Jel-bagkh* or *cham,* the order of appearance of the characters, the steps and the gestures, together with the passages in ritual text, corresponding to the successive phases of mime, are laid down in the dance script called *cham-yig.*

The Buddhist Priests/Monks *Lamas* reserve to themselves the exclusive right to act in these mystery plays; masquerading in quaint attire, with dramatic display and droll masked dances in the complex/courtyard of Gompas.

The Lama Dance Dramas, presented for the edification of the faithful, is the sacred drama of religious nature, illustrating in adapted form, the famous Buddhist Birth Stories i:e Buddha's previous lives as animals in which he practised compassion; *karuna; Snyingrje,* (such as the Visvantara and Sudhana Jatakas), tales about former lives of saints; about the triumph of Gurus like Padma-Sambhava; killing of enemies like *Langdharma* (devil with horn, historic enemy of Buddhists), stories of Black-Hat-Dancers (*zhwanags)* with aprons of bones & brocades; portrayal of demons & devils and deities encountered within the intermediate state between death and next life *(bar-do)* or on the way to heaven. The characters are identifiable by their masks e:g Stag (*Sa-ba),* Lion (*Sen-ge),* Tiger (T*s-chan)* or by peculiar clothes like Skeleton Clothes of the Graveyard Ghoul (*Tur).* Pre-Buddhist fables also figure here.

These masked dances are artistic creations, masterpieces of production and choreography. In masks where the grotesque or terrifying may seem expressionistic to us, we only have to deal with the codified iconography which has settled the actual appearance of the figures of the pantheon once and for all.

Some experts say that the early reflection of complete drama is evident in Nagananda, the most acclaimed five-act play of 7th century and attributed to king Harsha Vardhana (ruled from 606-648 AD) , belongs to Buddhist tradition, and is based on an enlightening Buddhist legend with invocation to Lord Buddha in Sanskrit language.

(Based on the extracts of the book *The Jewel in The Lotus & related notes* by the author.)

Short Story

ANIMALIA

Habib Kamran

Translated from the Kashmiri by Prof Neerja Mattoo

Principal characters:

Bambar	A kind of wasp;
Rahman Khan	An old, skilled mason;
I	The narrator, Habib Kamran.

Prologue

A swarm of bees turned the Idukki dam tourist resort into a veritable battleground after some picnicking pranksters threw a lighted cigarette butt at their hive, UNI reports from Alwaye.

Some 20 picnickers were hospitalized and about 100 others had to be given first aid after the incident on Wednesday.

Some nurses who had brought schoolchildren on an excursion saved their wards from the bees with their flowing robes and other clothes while they themselves faced the brunt of the attack.

Some women fell unconscious, unable to withstand the pain of the uninterrupted stings. On hearing of the attack, an excursion team from the Alwaye St. Antony's monastery, rushed to the spot for an "on the spot survey" but not one of the 20 monks escaped unbitten.

Some picnickers tried to save their skins by jumping into a jeep and speeding away but the winged army pursued them for more than a kilometre.

This is a story of Bambars, a kind of wasp basically the same as other wasps, but more dreadful because of larger size and venomous sting. There are several kinds of wasps found in Kashmir, of varying hues and sizes, having different names, but with almost the same general characteristics, among all of them. Here 'Bambar' must not be mistaken for 'Bombur' or bumble-bee, which is black and is associated with narcissus in Kashmiri folk tales. 'Bambar' and 'Bombur' , having similar names are vastly different. While Bambar is a veritable wasp, the Bombur or bumble-bee is a species apart, having nothing in common with any of the wasp family. The honeybee, known to everyone, however could be counted as a class among the wasps because of similar shape, habits and community living in particular. The honeybee, no doubt, stings like all wasps, but unlike them gives honey too, from which follows the Kashmiri proverb that, 'If you cannot give me honey, don't sting either'. But what do you say of the Bambar, which has a sting, but no honey. Even the most valiant of the humans, seeing a Bambar rushing towards them, lose nerve and start perspiring profusely. Another Kashmiri phrase, 'stung by Bambars' best illustrates the condition of one writhing in pain, after receiving such a sting, or a condition of extreme restlessness, even due to some other reasons.

1

Soon after taking up residence in my newly built house, I felt the need for a minor construction work in the compound--- just raising the cemented steps a little. Since there was urgency in the matter, I called in the first mason I could find, not the old reliable ones who had constructed my house. He worked for a few days, laying a few rows of bricks to raise the level of the steps. But I did not like the work and dismissed them. In the late afternoon, I went out to take a look at what they had done, examining their work carefully. Suddenly I noticed another man to my left also inspecting the steps that had been just built. I took a close look at him. He had a longish face, sharp nose and rather small eyes. He was dressed in kurta, shalwar and a waistcoat and wore an embroidered Kashmiri skullcap. He looked elderly and sported a pepper and salt beard. I asked him what he was looking at. "Nothing in particular, sir, I just wanted to take a look. Anything wrong with that?" was his reply.

"You must be a mason" said I. "You are right, I am a mason, at present I am building that doctor's house there," he said.

"Oh, so you are the one who is working there, may I know your name?"

"My name, Sir, is Abdul Rahman Khan, I live in the Ganderbal area."

"That's very nice. I would like to ask you something--- these steps here. How do they look to you? To me, they seem rather uneven."

"Of course they are uneven. This new row of bricks has been set in mud--- they should have used concrete."

"Now what do you advise?"

"There is only one thing to do, dismantle the new rows of bricks, reset them correctly, mixing cement instead of mud."

"But I have sent the masons away. Who is going to do it now?" I sounded worried.

"Don't worry, it is no big deal. I will come and do it myself---- either before nine in the morning or after five--- straighten the whole thing. It shouldn't take too long," he said.

"But why shouldn't that very mason come and set it right? After all he was paid for it---- though I have kept part of his wages still with me."

"O, come on, sir. Let him be. The poor fellow must have made a mistake --- how does it matter if I correct it for him? It wouldn't kill me," was his reply.

Rahman Khan was the first mason I had met who was ready to rectify a mess made by another. And that too at the cost of his leisure and without insisting on the remuneration being fixed beforehand. I was very impressed. That I should have got the steps redone correctly by the same mason who had messed them up in the first instance, is beside the point. I could not forget Rahman Khan after that.

2

One day in early summer, I was informed by my children that a bee-hive had come up in a room upstairs. I can't recall now whether it was immediately or a few days later that I went up to check. It is the largest room in the second storey, with just the frames of large windows on two sides---- of course there are no windows yet, the work is still incomplete.

The fact is that my house was under completion when I moved into it. The ground floor had been finished, with a living room, bed-rooms, kitchen and bathrooms. As for the first floor above, only the walls had been raised, with no plastering; window frames fixed but no jambs. There was no regular roofing as it involves an elaborate process for a Kashmiri house, requiring a lot of timber and huge expenditure, which I was unable to meet at the moment. Only some galvanized iron sheets had been placed on some planks, using nails sparingly in order to save the costly sheets from being perforated. This was a temporary arrangement for protecting us from rain and snow.

When I went into the room on the first floor one day, I saw a hive, suspended next to a window just under a rafter. It was as big as a large lotus-pod and even looked like one, from which the kernels have been removed and only empty holes left in their place. In the holes were seated baby wasps and even mature ones, while some were hovering around. But these wasps were somewhat larger than the ones I had seen so far. Their sight seemed to strike terror. I asked someone to identify them and was told that they were Bambars--- a different kind of mason-bee.

Looking at these wasps reminded me of an incident in my childhood. I must have been ten or eleven years old, playing in the compound of my old home with another boy of my age, named Ahad. Under the window was a hive. They were common wasps. Ahad was somewhat hyperactive. He picked up a bunch of pebbles and began to throw them one by one at the hive. Barely had the second pebble hit the wall near the hive when two wasps emerged and charged at him. Even though I stood next to him, they left me alone. Ahad ran to the bathroom to hide himself, but before he could pass through the door, one had landed on his head and stung him. He screamed in pain while a small hump-like swelling appeared at the place of the sting. A barber was called in and the hair around shaved off. Then an elderly woman came forward with a long knife in hand and began to scratch the hump and the area around it. It was said that this was necessary so that the sting was pulled out otherwise its poison would travel into the whole system.

The whole incident came vividly to my mind and I went down and forbade my children to touch or do any harm to the hive, they were to leave it strictly alone.

I did not go up to look at the hive afterwards. What was so special about it in any case, that I should have been drawn to it again? But some time later when I had some work in the room, I went into it and my eye fell on the hive and I was taken back.

I was no stranger to hives. I was also familiar with nests, big and small which birds build, lay eggs and hatch their young ones in. They are of blades of grass or some other material but this home of living creatures was different---- I had seen nothing like it before. It had grown since I last saw it. It was round and closed like the base of a large earthen-ware pot used to set the traditional crystallized sugar candy in, which Kashmiris send as a gift on weddings or other ceremonial occasions. Today there were hardly any holes or cells inside the hive visible, just a couple of tiny openings. You could say that they were little doorways for the Bambar's entry into the hive. I knew the structure was not hollow. I had seen it coming up. Besides, I know how hives are built, packed with little cells for the bees or wasps to live in, lay their eggs and to store food in. In fact most of the cells are reserved for this last purpose alone. I knew that once a cell fills up with food, it is properly sealed. The exterior of this particular hive, though giving no hint of the furious activity inside, was no less interesting--- all covered in a pretty pattern like the fine needle-work done by skilful embroiderers on a piece of silk. Another thing that filled me with wonder was how this enormous hive could hang so securely from a rafter. What gum, adhesive or bonding material had been used to make it appear nailed tightly to the single narrow rafter? What material, for that matter, did these Bambars use to build their home so solid? I had often seen them fly in swarms over the waters of the lake, almost level with its surface. I was told that they gather foam from the waters and mixing it with something else, fashion the building material for their hives, but I cannot say anything for sure about the constitution of this material. I also marvelled at who that master crafts-men could be who read out to them the detail of the designs and patterns that they followed, making them emerge so well-marked on the fabric of their hive. The more I observed it, the greater was my fascination. The result was that I could not resist taking a look at it at least once a day. At first I was a bit scared of approaching too close, but gradually my fear disappeared and I came closer and closer, till one day I could stand just below it, barely a meter between me and the hive. But not once did a wasp try to attack me. Often I stood next to the open window from which was their thoroughfare, but always they skirted me in their passage. Even when standing in their way elsewhere in the room, the same thing happened--- they always avoided my contact in their flight. This made me realize that just because an enemy happens to be around, it is no reason for the Bambars to attack him --- they are too busy to waste their energy needlessly. Since the hive was closed from outside, I could not see what activity was going on inside.

One day as usual, I stood close to the hive watching the two or three entries into it, through which the Bambars came and went throughout the day, when I noticed that one of these holes had shifted a little from its place. I marked the place well in my mind, determined to check, when I came the next time, whether the holes were really moving from one place to another, and I did notice a leftward movement of the hole, till one day I found it had travelled from extreme right to extreme left. Similarly the other two or three holes were also shifting. What could be the reason for this constant movement? Why do they not stay in one place? And then I understood the reason. The Bambars' house was in a continuous state of construction. Floor on floor being added daily. The difference between a human mason and these was that the former began construction from the bottom and proceeded upwards, while the later were building it laterally, outwards. Now I also understood why I could not see what they were up to, inside the shell. As new rooms on different levels for habitation were being added, surely they needed more corridors and passages to reach them. In this constant flux, how could the holes--- the entry points--- remain static? They had to be adjusted to the location and length of the passages. That must be it, I was certain. My certainty was further fortified by watching the continuous growth of the hive.

Another way in which the Bambar's style of construction differed from that of human masons was that while the latter laid the floor of the next storey on the previous one, thus covering it up completely, the former built pillars, inside and around the first and then laid the floor of the next storey on these pillars, leaving room for manoevre, exactly as on a chess-board, for the free movement of all the chess-men on it.

I always found some Bambars on duty, around the hive, whether it was day or dusk. The interesting thing was that they did not fly around it, but crawled all over it. Finally one day it became clear to me that they were not idling around just because they had nothing to do inside the hive at that moment, but their presence on the surface had a purpose to it.

I had called in a carpenter for some repair job. For some reason known only to him, he decided to get rid of the Bambar hive. While I was away on work, he took it upon himself to remove it at sunset. On my return I was informed that he had used a long pipe, which was lying there and shielding himself behind a door, tried to dislodge the hive from its mooring on the rafter, but even after several stabs with the pipe, it had not come loose, though some amount of damage had certainly been done to it. As soon as I learnt of it, my first impulse was to go up and take a look, but it was very late and there was no arrangement for light upstairs. So I waited till the morning. Besides, it would not even be safe to venture in, while the whole swarm must be in such a state of agitation at the attack made upon them.

When I went up the next morning I did not dare to step in. I also took the door jamb as shield and peeped in. I found the hive with the same old holes and the bees passing through them as usual. The three or four Bambars that used to be on duty outside, were crawling around the hive, like they used to. I could see no sign of any harm to the hive, nor were the Bambars in any state of agitation at all. It was obvious that they had done an excellent piece of repairing job--- they must have been at work through the night to restore their home to its old state and were back to their normal, busy routine. Now I understood the special role that the Bambars crawling up and down all over the outer surface of the hive all the time, played. They are there to look for any damage and to repair it quickly, should any occur. They also watch out for marauders, some other species of wasps or insects trying to get into the hive, so that they can finish them off promptly. Recalling the incident of my childhood, mentioned earlier, I was sure that they also watched out for a human marauder. Should they spot anyone coming with the intention of damaging their home, they waste no time in chasing him away and even punishing with a lethal sting.

Watching their activity for some time on another day, a new truth dawned upon me. The crawling Bambars might be performing guard duty but that was only a minor part of their work--- their main job, I realized, was the construction and extension of the hive. Like a human mason lays bricks from a scaffolding, these Bambars cling to the outer surface of the hive while carrying out their building work so that the hive grew bigger and bigger. Building work went on simultaneously inside too, the stores being stocked up and children raised. One thing, however, which I could not determine was whether the Bambars took turns doing these different jobs or whether they were specialized jobs meant specially for particular ones--- I had no way to tell. Of one thing there was no doubt, those busy with a particular job, whether inside or outside the hive, are not the only ones skilled to do it. I noticed that a Bambar engaged in a job, did the work involved in all its stages itself from procuring the material to finishing off construction. There did not seem to be any division of labour in the strict sense nor a distinction between unskilled labour and skilled artisans. Only when a Bambar ran out of material, was he relieved by another coming in with more. This process went on without any break in the momentum of work. Of course, in case of any accidental or deliberate damage to the hive, it was the repair work that took precedence over construction and soon the hive would look as good as new.

One day I was at the butcher shop when I saw half a dozen Bambars hanging around a leg of mutton, suddenly one landed on the meat. The butcher brought down blunt side of his knife on it, but the fact that it was seated on the mutton softened the blow. It was thrown on the shop floor where I saw it struggling to pick itself up. The fate of the other Bambars was the same, all flailing their bodies on the ground after being hit by the butcher's knife.

They did not die, nor could they fly. They just lay their struggling, rolling from one end of the shop floor to the other. Seeing their plight, I said to the butcher, "Leave them alone, please. What harm have they done to you?"

"O, don't say anything sir, you have no idea of how horrible they are", the butcher said.

"Why, are they terribly wicked"? I asked.

"Cruel and dangerous beyond description." Another customer standingby, said, "These are Bambars, sir. The very name should give you an idea of what they are. If seven or eight of them should sting a grown up man at once, that is the end of him."

"I have them in our home. They have built a hive on the ceiling of a room there," said I, "but they have never done us any harm."

"Don't ever try to pull it down," he warned me. "They will go berserk, swing in through doors and windows, sting left and right, and spare no one in sight."

Even without this advice, I had no intention at all of fiddling with the hive--- the question of pulling it down did not arise. After all I had seen the labour, the hard work without respite, day and night, that the Bambars had put in for months in building a home for themselves. What right did I have to destroy it?

It was around that time I read a news item--- a disturbing item. A large group of picnickers, out on a holiday found themselves near a bee-hive. The devil got into one of them and he threw a live cigarette bit into the hive. This sparked off a terrible agitation among the bees, they came out in swarms and launched a general assault. Some people had to be hospitalized as a result, and 100 others given first aid. Some men who sought to protect their wards, all received the stings. None of the 20 other monks who came out for the rescue of their fellow beings could escape the wrath of the bees. Some picnickers who made their escape in a jeep, were chased by the winged squads for more than a kilometre.

This in fact is the essential bee-nature and how much more ferocious this bee-nature or wasp-nature could there be found in Bambars, which is a far more developed form of the wasp species, should not be difficult to comprehend.

This set me thinking--- supposing the Bambars in my room should one day be overcome by their essential wasp-nature, nothing less than a massacre would be the result. Now I could no longer think of them only with affection, my feelings began to be tinged with fear. The fear I felt now had already been ingrained by me in my children to prevent them from going anywhere near the hive or to fiddle with it. And I could still not be sure that a rowdy child who came to play with them, belonging to a visitor coming to call on us, wouldn't try a trick on them and leave us to face the frightful consequences. But in spite of these apprehensions, the idea of destroying the hive, even if I had the means and safety measures to do it, never occurred to me. There was something that kept reassuring me that no harm would come to me from these Bambars.

I had heard that in winter the wasps are reduced to an almost inactive state and cannot fly out. I thought of waiting for the winter. I would then have the hive removed and safely placed somewhere on the banks of the Anchar lake, and when it was spring again, the Bambars and their families could safely emerge and carry on with their task.

Standing on the bank of the Anchar lake, the view from my house is that of the lake and a huge, almost endless swamp. The embankment that rises to the east of the lake is high, much above the level ground to the east where people have built their houses, my house being one. Some houses are on a higher elevation than the others, because the land seems to be naturally divided into two separate levels. I don't know whether it has something to do with this topography or something else, but when the wind blows here, it is an extremely strong wind with a high velocity. One day when a particularly strong gust blew, a part of the roofing of my house just folded up. I thanked God that the part under which stood the Bambars' hive was intact. The carpenter was called in. He flattened the sheets and began to nail them to the rafters, hammering in long five inch nails to secure it better. He used more nails than before, penetrating the sheets in the process. A few days later, the wind rose again and it was even stronger than before. Though the sheets directly above the hive stayed intact, three from the other side were actually blown away. One fell in my own yard, another was carried to my neighbour's where it fell with a bang and the third was thrown into the lane behind. They were sturdy sheets of a thick gauge. Fortunately no one was hurt. Had they fallen on a man or animal, it would have been the end for him and I could not have escaped responsibility. Wouldn't they have demanded to know how I had ignored the possible consequences when this was not the first time it had happened? Hadn't I seen that my sheets were being sparsely nailed and thus had a tendency to be blown away? Why then had I not taken steps to prevent it? Their accusations would have certainty been justified. Besides, frequent nailing jobs were doing the sheets no good, turning them into sieves with so many holes. Soon they would be no use as roofing, the most expensive item while building a house in Kashmir, because the whole amount of its cost has to be shelled out in one go. Pondering on all this, my mind was made up. I would have the roof fixed properly, beams and all, even if I had to beg or borrow for the purpose, it could not be put off any more, I knew. The carpenter was called in again, and I discussed the details and estimate with him.

The first problem, once the decision to take up the project was made, was of what to do about the Bambar hive. Would they allow the work to proceed? But I believed that they would not sting or attack unless somebody provoked them. We were in and out of the room, right under their nose all the time but nothing happened which might have instilled fear in us. Even when the wind folded the sheets up or blew them away and the carpenter had repaired the roof twice afterwards, they never bothered anyone. Besides, the carpenter's work would be mostly above the hive, not where the hive was, so there should be no problem. I was confident, the work could begin now.

The carpenter went up to take a look. Coming down from his survey he pronounced, "You will need to have a two and a half foot brick wall laid all round, in order to raise a solid support for window frames. You need to raise one wall to full height leaving room for the gable and only then can the struts and roof beams be laid."

I thought about it and realized that it meant a few days job for a mason and the masonry work must be completed before the carpenter could begin. Who but Rahman Khan should I think of, when the need for a mason arose. I forgot my old masons and began to look for him. Luckily he was working at a nearby place and I went there to see him, though he was engaged yet he seemed unable to say no to me and agreed to come and work for me. A few days later, he turned up with his team. On the carpenter's instructions, the *Vosta* first went into the room where the hive was. The fact is that he was terrified at the sight, but I explained to him that these Bambars would not harm anyone unless provoked. I also told him that all his work was clearly not near the hive, so there was no need for us to worry about the hive or for the Bambars to worry about us, we would leave them strictly alone. Rahman Khan seemed reassured and said, "we will start at the other end first, let us see what happens by the time we reach this one."

The work began with vigour. Four masons, one carpenter and eight labourers came daily. The temporary planks under the sheeting were removed and the sheets laid on the roof-beams. However, the one under whose rafter the hive was, and the two on its sides were not touched at all. The labourers carried bricks, mortar and the pieces of required timber upstairs, and the masons built the brick walls around three sides of the house, leaving place for the gable on the fourth. Everything was going on normally without anything untoward happening.

One day, I went up to see the progress of the work and saw the carpenter and the masons had downed their tools, standing in a group to one side, the labourers too had put down their sacks and basins and gathered round the group. I found they were all standing in a circle around a labourer, Hassan, watching him. Some laughing and some just bewildered. One mason was not part of the group. He stood alone, with a serious look on his face. He too had put down his trowel, and was watching Hassan, lost in thought. He was Rahman Khan.

"Hey, what's the matter with you all? Why have you stopped work? Is everything all right?' I asked.

"It is Hassan, Sir, he has just committed murder" a labourer said, laughingly.

"Oh performed quite a feat he has today. He certainly deserves a prize."

"What feat are they talking about, Hassan?", I asked.

Hassan told me that he had been asked by the carpenter to get him a piece of timber that was lying on the sheet under which lay the hive. Hassan went to fetch it, but the moment he sat on the sheet, two Bambars appeared suddenly from nowhere, they did not touch anyone but Hassan who tried to beat a retreat, but there was nowhere to go on the exposed roof and a Bambar landed on his head.

Hassan gave the details of this encounter thus, "Barely had it landed on my head, when I gave it a hard whack with the heel of my hand and crushed it against my skull. That was the end of it".

"Tell me, why did you rub this wasp paste on your head?"

"I wanted to kill it before it could sting me".

"You are a great expert, no doubt, so you did not allow it to sting you?"

Hassan nodded, I looked at him, scrutinized the expression on his face. His eyes belied his words.

"Tell me the truth, Hassan. Look at me, did it sting you or not?"

"Yes Sir, it did sting".

When a tiny thing dares to chase a huge hulk of a man like Hassan, it might succeed in stinging him, but its own life can be snapped out with just one knock of the man's finger; one gentle breath is enough to extinguish the flame of a lamp. But that will not deter one, out to defend the security of his home, no matter whether the adversary is a giant or an ogre, he will readily take him on. After all, the moment a Bambar sets out after the enemy, it is bent on martyrdom, knowing that all roads of return are closed because the moment its sting is lodged into a foreign body and left there, it is of no use to the community, therefore an outcast. Perhaps the Bambars believe that one who is not armed does not belong to their tribe. This ready-to-die attitude must also be part of the wasp nature. The enemy must be driven away even if it means certain death. Only such a committed creature can be part of the social wasp community. There are no prizes to be won, no awards to be given, no tombs, no memorials to such a martyr, in fact, no recognition of any kind, it is just a question of sheer commitment to the community.

The work began once again, but I noticed the workmen talking to each other in whispers. I surveyed the area, three sides of brick work had been completed and the frame work for windows also set in one wall, but the side on which the hive hung had not been touched yet. Brick work here would necessitate the temporary removal of the sheeting above and erection of scaffolding almost touching the hive, where would I find the daredevil to attempt such a task. He would need to be a superman and these were mere workmen. Why had I not thought about such an eventuality before? It was only when the incident with Hassan occurred that I understood the full serious implication of the Bambar hive's presence here. The problem was to find someone ready to risk working in that particular area. I was well and truly in a cleft-stick, neither could I have the work abandoned nor proceeded with. The very thought of what might happen if the sheet above the hive was lifted, sent shivers down my spine. Having seen a mere preview in earlier demonstration of the wasp nature, I could not bear to imagine the violence if it came into full play. Watching the very roof of their home lifted away would send them into a frenzy, making them launch a frontal attack on everyone in sight. How the orders for general mobilization would be given or how a strategy for attack was worked out and transmitted to all the divisions and battalions, I would not know. But I knew one thing, when my workmen saw the coming assault, the terror would send them tumbling down the scaffolding all the way from the third floor down to the ground below. The whole scenario was too alarming, I just could not bear to think further, heaved a deep sigh and resigned myself to whatever was fated.

In the dusky light of the evening, I went to take another look at the hive. It was enormous now, as big as a cauldron. The Bambars were all inside, resting after the day's work. In fact their work was over, the provisions for winter stored and time for them to relax, they had no apprehensions of harm from anywhere. When winter came and most living things froze in the cold, the Bambars would be all snug and warm inside their home. I thought it all over and felt that they certainly deserved to enjoy the fruits of their hard labour. I cast another look at the hive. All was quiet inside it, only the three or four on guard outside, crawling all over, watchful and alert.

Next morning the workmen came on time and the work went ahead as usual. At eleven I went to the market and on return found signs of confusion in the house. I went up quietly and saw that work was at a standstill, all workmen were crowding around the Vosta, Rahman Khan, who I was told had been stung by a Bambar. One was scraping the area of the sting with a knife, the others pressed his legs, feet and head.

"What happened?" I asked Rahman Khan.

"It was a Bambar Sir. It was my own fault I tried to pry that sheet next to the one above the hive, loose. I just hit it mildly with hammer, that must have given the hive a jolt. Before I knew anything a Bambar had got inside my shalwar leg and stung me just above my knee."

Instead of asking him about the pain, I said, "Wasn't there anyone near you at the time?"

"Of course, how could I be alone, the carpenter Ghulam Nabi and a labourer were next to me".

"Who was it that hit the sheet, can you tell me". I asked eagerly.

"It was I. I did it Sir", said Rahman Khan.

"You hit the sheet from above, and the Bambars were all under it, in the hive. For heaven's sake, Vosta, who gave them the information that you were the one whose hand gave the blow? And that you are the one who had to be punished? Why did they leave the other unharmed? How do you explain it?"

The situation did not allow the Vosta to produce a philosophy or theory to give an explanation, as he used to do, on such occasions. The man was in agony. But I too was restless, unable to figure out how the Bambars never made a mistake, in finding the real target of their vengeance and gave punishment precisely to the one who deserved it. When they stung an arm, a leg, a hand or any other part of a body, how did they know that it belonged to the one who had done them harm and no one else? Do their eyes have the capacity to take in the whole form of a creature of the size of a mountain? The thought was mind boggling. Did they also understand that this was a human being wearing a shalwar and that the best way was to enter through the leg of the garment, render him helpless and inflict maximum damage upon him? This is one among the countless mysteries of this world of living things which the human being is still unable to solve. Dragging myself out of the depth of these thoughts, I turned to Rahman Khan, whose plight I must attend to, I told myself.

"Show me, where it stung you", I asked.

He pulled his trouser leg up and I saw a big welt like swelling just above his knee. It was red, glowing like a live coal. It seemed to glisten with an oil-like substance seeming to ooze out of it.

"What is that oily thing oozing there?" I asked.

"Oh it is butter, I rubbed a pat on the sting. I thought it might cool the burning sensation", was his reply.

I glanced at his face and saw that it had turned pale with pain. He looked like agony personified and I asked him, "Is it paining too much?"

"Oh don't ask me, Sir, my insides are on fire, the venom raging through my body, from the top of my head to toe-nails".

Suddenly I thought I saw before me the Vosta who had worked here earlier, who had an extremely violent temper and a fiery tongue, I thought it was he and not Rahman Khan who had been stung by the Bambar. He was giving me a look full of hatred and venom. Without saying a word to me he was turning to the other workmen and saying, "Come on everybody. No more work here, hurry up and pick up your tools. We are leaving now, this very minute". And I thought I saw all the masons, carpenter and the labourers walking out on me, and the Vosta telling the labourers, "Out everybody, gather your stuff, we are not working here anymore", and the labourers flinging their shovels, mattocks, mixing basins down, and the masons and the carpenter with sacks of tools slinging from their shoulders, leaving without a word or backward glance, and I pleading nervously with the Vosta, what was I to do? And he rubbing his sore leg and casting a blazing look at me, saying, "First carry this hive on your head and dump it somewhere and then come and ask us what to do. The cheek of this fellow! Raises this menace to play with lives of people for his own amusement". The next minute everybody was gone and then I saw myself going up and looking at the mess that my house was, in dismay. Some galvanized iron sheets uprooted and stacked on one side, some placed on rafters, all the building material, bricks, timber and all, left lying in a heap on the first floor; and all this in the month of December with a snowfall imminent and all other Vostas and workmen, skilled or otherwise, busy upto their necks in work and none available for love or money. Neither could I do anything to restore the roofing to its former state. The base was all uneven now, a full height wall on one side and low parapets on the other three sides. Waves of horror washed over me, thinking of the consequences, should it decide to snow. Suddenly I awoke from my reverie and found myself looking at Rahman Khan. I couldn't believe my eyes; bravo the lionhearted master-mason who was back at work. One trouser leg rolled up above his stung knee, raising row upon row of brickwork, admonishing the labour force. "Hurry up, boys, with those bricks and bring up more mortar for plaster." Perhaps it was against his grain to accept that a mere insect of a Bambar could force him down from his scaffolding.

The workmen had taken a break for lunch and were smoking the hookah by turns, but Rahman Khan had taken the carpenter aside and I noticed the two engrossed in conversation. Obviously they were discussing something important. After some time, a labourer came down and informed me, "Sir, the work will not proceed till the Bambar hive is removed".

"But who will do it?" I don't know whether I actually spoke these words aloud, or thought to myself, but the labourer went on, "There are ways no doubt. If you are ready to spend money, you will surely find someone to do it, of course it is not easy".

"But what will he do? Who will dare to go and touch it?"

"Oh they come in the dead of the night, their entire bodies covered with thick clothes. They just wrap large canvas sacks around the hive. Then they jab it at the top, to make it come loose from its moorings and fall into the sack. They carry the whole thing to a river, tie a heavy stone to the sacking in which the hive is held and throw it into the water where it sinks quietly, drowning all the wasps. Sometimes they soak the whole thing in kerosene and then set it on fire and that is the end of the hive and its residents".

"How cruel this action is! I can't pay anyone to do it. I just can't", I was telling myself.

In the afternoon, Rahman Khan and the carpenter were again in conference. The former's son, Noor Mohammad, who was also a mason by profession, had joined them. I saw that there was a scowl on his face and he was looking at his father angrily. I spoke to him in a flattering tone. "Why, Vosta, have we done something to annoy you?"

"Oh this father of mine has gone soft in the head. Tell me something, Sir, aren't these Bambars a creation of God? And if they are here, musn't there be some purpose to it"? he spoke in a tone of despair.

“Oh yes”, I answered.

“Why has my father to pit himself against them? Is there any lack of work for us? In fact we came here only out of consideration for you, otherwise we have work waiting for us at three or four building sites. What is the pressing need for us to come and work here? Is it our job to remove the Bambar hive from its place?”

“I never said that”, was my tame reply.

Without saying anything more, Noor Mohammad went back to the scaffolding and continued the work. I turned to Rahman Khan, and before I could ask him whether they would come to work the next day, he said, “Your work, Sir, will not suffer. We are not the sort to let down a customer. We will carry on the work, but on one condition. You are not to come and distract us anymore. Please stay downstairs and let us go on with our job. Leave it to us, we know what to do when. You don’t have to tell us anything, that only serves to confuse us”!

I noticed most of the workmen leaving earlier than usual that day. Among them was Noor Mohammad.

The Vosta, Rahman khan, one other mason, the carpenter and two labourers were still upstairs. They were chatting, gathered round the hookah. They stayed on till it was dark, and then Hassan the labourer came down and said, “The Vosta is asking for some kerosene oil”

“What does he need it for?” I asked.

“The Bambar hive is to be set on fire”, he said

“No, no, there is no question of setting it on fire! Go and tell them that it can’t be done”.

"But why not?" Hassan was grinning. I could not think of an answer readily, but after a while, said, "You had taken that jute bag up, hadn't you? Why don't you wrap the thing in that and take it somewhere far off on the Anchar Lake and leave it there?"

"Who, Sir, can dare to do that? There are Bambars crawling all over it, who has the guts to go near it?" Hassan was apparently referring to the guard Bambars.

"Is there no other way?" I said and after a pause added, "tell me something, if you set fire to it, the rafter will catch it too and then the whole house will be ablaze".

His grin growing broader, Hassan said, "That, Sir, is the business of the Vosta. You don't have to worry on that account. Didn't he tell you to sit at ease, and leave them alone and not try to distract them?"

Hassan left me and went out. I pondered once again: what I should or could do. There were two alternatives; either let the work come to a halt, or allow the workmen full liberty to do what they wanted. But under the situation I could only just regret why I had started it at all. There was no other option before me. I just could not resolve the dilemma. Frozen where I was, I knew that the matter was out of my hands now.

Hassan got some kerosene from the kitchen and went up. I could see the whole sequence of events in my imagination. They wrapped a rag at one end of an iron rod lying there, soaked the rag in the kerosene and set a match to it, the burning rag touched the hive, it caught fire, went up in flames. How quickly it all happened!

I sat immobile in my room, while the Bambars, their families and home were burning. I did not have the heart to go and see whether the rafters of my house too had burnt down or were saved. I did not dare to go up.

Soon after, Hassan came down and triumphantly announced, "Oh Sir, you were so nervous! What was the need? See, nothing untoward has happened, after all. You thought that rafters would burn along with the hive? You thought we were so stupid. It was only half burnt when they jabbed it and tore it away from the rafter and flung it on the floor. It is now burning on the cement floor".

I left the house, There was a function at a relative's place which I could not avoid attending. Returning late at night, I went straight to bed, without speaking to anyone. Though I was awake early the next morning. I did not go up and kept to my room. A labourer came, went up and then came rushing into my room and lamented, "Oh Sir, don't ask me what happened. Impossible to tell how many were burnt to death! Big ones, little ones, every single one of them. Oh sir, it is such a sight. Enough to melt one's heart, it is. You have to get up and see for yourself, you will not bear to see it all".

I dragged myself to follow him upstairs. Treading gingerly, I peeped in from behind the door-jamb and then stepped in nervously. My eyes went up to the rafter to which the hive had been attached yesterday it was gone without a trace. In its place was a thick coating of a black soot. My glance fell on the floor. On one side lay a little heap of ashes. The thriving community of living things which had been bursting with activity a day earlier, was reduced to this little mound of nothingness! Visible through the ashes were some forms of the hexagonal cells of a hive, filled up with something whitish like honey, the Bambar's stock of food for winter. Scattered around were some half burnt Bambars, drones, half burnt wings and the floor was stained.

And then I saw something that sent a chill through me. A Bambar crawling madly over the ashes, and burrowing into it, going around it, searching, exactly like a human being, spared from a conflagration, scans and burrows into a burnt down habitation, in a frenzy of sorrow, hoping to find his near ones, his life's dearest possessions. The frustration and despair of such a man was what this Bambar's delirious movements contained.

It is believed that whenever a beehive or wasp-hive is destroyed, it is that very place they continue to haunt. But this one was not flying to that side at all. It was searching in the ashes of its home, running frantically, covering itself with ashes, restless, moving all the time.

"How and where did it spend the night?" I asked myself, "and how did the flames spare it? Even if it had been away from the hive, when it was set on fire and came in when it was burning, I had no doubt, it would have flung itself into the blaze and attempted to sting the flames".

I was startled out of my thoughts when I saw the labourer aim something at the restive Bambar. Sternly I shouted at him, "Stop it, will you? Don't you see how it has come out unscathed from raging flames. Perhaps it was destined to live!".

But I might not have spoken at all, or perhaps he pretended to be deaf. Ignoring me completely, he went ahead, put a sandaled foot on the Bambar and brought his whole weight upon it. When he lifted his foot, I saw a small patch of wetness on the floor and two tiny wings stuck to it, nothing else.

It was late, when I went up again to see the progress of work, and sat near Rahman Khan.

He said, "I was hauled up last night, Sir, two messengers came for me and took me to a high dignitary. And I was grilled there. They asked me why I had done something so cruel, and what harm the Bambars had done to me. For answer I rolled up my trouser leg and showed them my sore leg, and told them that I was a wage earner, doing my own job and had done no wrong to them. It was they who attacked an innocent man, their sting had set all my body smouldering and as the venom spread, my leg was swollen. So I appealed to them for justice and asked them to be fair".

I don't know whether it was a dream he was describing, or he was actually under stress, overcome by a sense of guilt, trying to relieve himself, in this manner. Noor Mohammad gave him an angry look and turned away.

For a long time afterwards, I saw no sign of Bambars anywhere. And I thought that I had seen the end of this artistic and knowledgeable creature, the perfect product of nature; the supreme model of sacrifice, whose actions seemed to emanate from some unknown source of Reason, in not harming those who harmed him not, and justice, in dispensing retribution, proportionate to offence; an epitome of all that is best in the human sense, and that his disappearance had left a gaping vacuum, leaving the world a poorer place.

Several days went by, then one day I was near the butcher's shop again. Suddenly I heard the hum of Bambars. I rubbed my eyes in disbelief – three or four Bambars hovered around a piece of mutton. I drew near and examined them closely, but a rustling sound drew my attention to the bucket of water standing next to the butcher. I saw a Bambar struggling to save itself from drowning. It was trying to swim to the edge of water and climb on the wall of the bucket, but even as it attempted to do so, the slippery surface of the bucket and the fact that its wings were wet and heavy with water, made it fall back into the water. So many times it tried, circling the water, reaching the edge, climbing up a few centimeters, but slipping back each time. Finally it gave up the struggle and lay still. Perhaps it was about to breathe its last, when I put a twig into the water near it. At its touch life seemed to return to the seemingly dead Bambar. Quickly it climbed onto it and I pulled the twig out and laid it along with its burden in the sun. The Bambar was drenched and could not move at first. Slowly its wings dried and it spread them out, rubbing them with its hind legs. After a little while, it flew away. I turned to the butcher and found him staring at me in disbelief.

"There must be so many Bambars in this area. God knows where they come from", I said.

He gave me the answer that I wanted, "Oh yes, lots of them, there are. Look, there on that poplar tree, that is where they have their nest.

I looked in the direction he pointed to, went there and scanned all the poplar trees but could not find any hive. I did not feel like asking the butcher again to show me where it was. He would certainly not leave his shop and customers to get up, in order to satisfy this odd desire of mine.

A few days later, I asked a labourer at my place, "Tell me, do these Bambars build their hives on tree tops also? Have you ever seen one there?"

He laughed and said, "Oh sir, right outside your house, on the Chinar tree there! Have you never noticed it?"

I looked at the bare branches of the Chinar. Yes, he was right. On the very top of it was a Bambar hive. I sat down and kept my eyes glued to it. It had been built on the fork of two or three branches and was a replica of the one they had built in the room of my house. I could even see the Bambars coming and going around it, in this season, when there were no leaves on the Chinar trees.

Now I would look at it every time I went out or returned home. I told myself that they were safe and no human hand would reach the top of the tree to do them harm.

Seeing the ingenuity and valour of the Bambars I went so far as to say, "When such safe places of tree tops are available to them so easily, why do they go and build their home under the coverings of human houses?"

But at the same moment, another flash of thought made me realize that to think so high of this winged insect, just because he lives a social life, builds a home for himself and is ready to lay down his life any moment for its safety, tantamounts to give it a status, well nigh that of human beings. How should he know that the spot he had chosen to build upon, happened to be the ceiling or cornice of a house, which the owner had built or acquired at enormous cost of money and only the latter had a right upon it and that it should not trespass or build its home here.

Work on my house went on without further hitch and the day came round when I bade good-bye to the workmen, the Vosta, his group, carpenter, labourers and all.

It was extremely cold now – the dead of winter, no wasps were in sight anywhere. They are reduced to a state of inactivity in this season, supine in their hives unable to move out.

5

I do not know the reason why I missed taking a look at the Bambar hive on the Chinar tree for several days. And then one day, when I did, the first thing I checked on was the hive. My breath froze and the ground seemed to rock under my feet at the sight.

"Oh no" I cried in despair. I saw four crows perched on the hive, probing their beaks into it and pulling out the Bambars one by one and swallowing them. It was a scene right out of a wazwan. Four people sitting around a trami and voraciously feasting on all the delicacies piled upon it. Exactly in that style the crows went on feeding upon the half dead Bambars, undisturbed, completely at ease. Within a few days the hive had disappeared. The crows had eaten up all the Bambars, the food stored in it, even the hive itself. After the fire there had been at least a heap of ashes left, but after this holocaust there was nothing.

The crow has rightly been called a clever fool. It never ventured anywhere near the Bambars, in the other seasons, when they were active. The Bambars would have gone and buried themselves in its feathers, pierced its body with their stings and killed it in no time. Had they even been a whole flock, not a single one would have escaped the Bambars' wrath. But this time they had been almost lifeless, totally helpless in defending themselves, perhaps even unaware of the need for defence.

"Is this the reason why they seek the shelter of the human residences to build their home", I began to see the light.

The Bambar cannot find a place inside a human residence, and outside it, can there be a spot beyond the reach of a crow? Where then is the Bambar to find a niche under the sky to lodge itself in, how is it going to survive? No matter which way I looked at it, I found that it cannot sustain its existence.

The Bambar is doomed to extinction.

A very high snowfall followed by severe frost held the whole place in its grip. Everything, the earth and the sky were caught in a deadly silence. The waters of Dal Lake, Anchar Lake and all other lakes turned into solid blocks of ice. Water in pipes and blood in veins-- all fluids seemed congealed into ice. I fell ill and remained imprisoned within the walls of my room for more than a month. Gradually in this state of sickness, the Bambars faded from my mind. Then came a time when I did not remember anything about them.

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